A STUDY OF THE QUR'AN

The Universal Guidance for Mankind

To
Mr.
With the compliment of
M. A. Malek
&
Mr. A.S.K. Jommel
2/3/2000

Mohammed Abdul Malek

Copyright: There is no copyright but permission must be obtained from the publisher for reproduction of any text from this publication.

Published by: M. A. Malek
69 Prince of Wales Road
Sutton
Surrey SM1 3PE

First edition: June 1997
Second revised edition: December 1997
Third revised Edition: January 2000

Internet address: http://members.aol.com/MAmalek2
Email: MAmalek1@aol.com

ISBN: 0 9530907 2 8

Contents

No		Page
Acknowledgements		v
4 Verses from the Qur'an		vii
1. Introduction		1
2. Knowledge of Arabic and its importance		7
3. Basic rules to be followed in the study of the Qur'an		12
	3.1 Verses which are clear and not subject to interpretation	12
	3.2 Verses which are allegorical	13
4. Explanation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an		17
5. Understanding the first sura: *Al-Fatiha*, the key to the Qur'an		21
6. Basic teachings of the Qur'an		25
7. The prophets and their revelations		38
	7.1 Introduction	38

7.2 Adam (*Adam*) 40
7.3 Prophets named in the Qur'an 42
7.4 Noah (*Nuh*) 42
7.5 Abraham (*Ibrahim*) 43
7.6 Moses (*Musa*) 49
7.7 Jesus (*Isa*) 55
7.8 Muhammad (*Muhammad*) 63

8. Topics apparently controversial 78

8.1 Punishment for stealing 78
8.2 Adultery (see section 10.3 selection no. 1) 81
8.3 Does the Qur'an sanction the beating of women? 81
8.4 Women's rights 84
8.5 Divorce 93
8.6 Polygamy 98
8.7 The veil (*hijab*) 101
8.8 *Jihad* 105
8.9 Intoxicating liquors 109
8.10 Gambling 112
8.1.i Interest (*riba*/usury, see section 12.1) 113
8.1.ii Intercession (see section 10.3 selection no. 8) 114
8:1.iii The "Moon Sighting" controversy 114

9. Latter-day saints 122

10. The implications of Hadith for Islam 126

10.1 The meaning of Hadith and *Sunnah* 126
10.2 Historical background of Hadiths 128
10.3 Ways the Hadith contradicts the Qur'an 135
10.4 Usefulness of Hadith literature 154

11. The five pillars 160

11.1 Declaration of faith 161
11.2 *Salat* (prayer) 165
11.3 *Zakat* (see section 12.33) 183
11.4 Fasting 183
11.5 *Hajj* (pilgrimage) 189

12. Economic system of the Qur'an 198

13. Law-making in Islam 221

13.1 Introduction 221
13.2 The development of jurisprudence *(Ahle-fiqh)* 222
13.3 Influence of Hadiths as a source of law 223
13.4 The legal system of the Shi'ites 224
13.5 The Qur'an as a source of law 226
13.6 Application of *Shariat* laws in modern times 230

14. Qur'an and Science 233

15. The purpose of Mankind 237

15.1 At the individual level (*Nafs*) 237

15.2 At the collective level *(Unfus)* **238**
15.3 Function of Nature
(the external world *Af'aque*) **238**
15.4 Return to Allah (most important
of all) **238**

16. The Islamic state **242**

17. Islam and human rights **254**

18. The Jewish scriptures and the Bible **259**

19. Human evolution **281**

20. Conclusion **284**

***Appendices* (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6)** **291**

Bibliography **300**

Book Reviews (2nd edition) ***back cover***

Acknowledgements

The inspiration for writing this book originated in a Qur'anic study group which at present does not exist. There is no doubt that many of the thoughts included in the book came from people in the study group, and without their help and understanding it would not have been possible to write this book. A few of them also provided additional help through valuable suggestions on the very first draft, and for this I am truly grateful.

I am indebted to many authors, from whose writings I have taken quotations and without whom my sources of knowledge and understanding would have been far more restricted. All quotations are identified by superscripts and referenced at the end of the chapter.

I must offer my sincere thanks and deep appreciation particularly to one of my close friends and relatives who wants to remain anonymous. He has provided most of my sources and many valuable suggestions and comments, all of which I have found extremely useful. I owe him much.

To my wife I am indebted beyond words. She has spent many days and hours in editing the first two editions, and throughout my work she has provided valuable suggestions and much useful assistance.

With regard to this third edition, I count this as a great blessing from Allah, as the stimulus and the help came suddenly and unexpectedly. It so happened that one Mr. Sam Gerrans, who as a Muslim and a linguist, liked the book and offered to edit the book voluntarily. He spent numerous hours editing the text, and provided valuable suggestions most of which I have adopted. He then kindly re-checked the revised text and the result is this third edition which could not have been realised without his effort and dedication. I do not think that I can thank him enough, but I am sincerely and deeply grateful to him for all his contribution.

With this new edition I have managed to revise certain chapters, particularly chapter 8, 10, 11, 18 and the Appendix. On the the back cover I have also included two reviews of the 2nd edition of the book.

And He has made subservient to you, from Himself, all that is in the heavens and the earth: in this, behold, are messages indeed for people who think! (45:13)

These are Allah's revelations that we recite to you truthfully. In which Hadith other than Allah and His revelations do you believe? (45:6)

And (remember) when Allah laid a charge on those who had received the Scripture (He said): Ye are to expound it to mankind and not to hide it. But they flung it behind their backs and bought thereby a little gain. Verily, evil is that which they have gained thereby. (3:187)

Surely We created man of the best stature. Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low, save those who believe and do good works, and theirs is a reward unfailing. (95:4-6)

1. INTRODUCTION

The word *Qur'an* means 'reading', and the book of that name claims to be a universal book of guidance for the whole of mankind. The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters (suras). Each chapter (sura) is divided into a number of verses (*ayats*, see note 1). The first sura has seven verses and is the key to the Qur'an. The longest sura is the second sura. It has 286 verses and can be regarded as the summary of the Qur'an. **The Qur'an is not a book of religion in the conventional sense of the word 'religion'**. It is, in reality, the book of 'Nature' to guide mankind to the way we must live on this planet with the least possible conflict, i.e. with balance and harmony, not only with the people of the world but also with the natural world.

The Qur'an was sent down as a revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (*AS*, or pbuh, -- see notes 2 & 3 at the end of this section) through Gabriel[A1] (*Jibreel*). It was written down and compiled in the form of a book by the prophet during his lifetime without any alteration and **the book (*Al-Kitab*)** remains unspoilt since that time. As an additional safeguard it was also memorised by many people during the prophet's lifetime.

The Qur'an claims, very clearly, that it is the Word of Allah (see notes 4, 5, 6 & 7) and not the word of the prophet. The prophet's position vis-à-vis the Qur'an is that the Word of Allah was uttered by the prophet when he was inspired with the revelation. So, in effect the Qur'an becomes the utterance or 'the sayings' of the prophet. Therefore, in this case only, one cannot make a

distinction in this regard between the two - i.e. 'the Word of Allah' and 'the sayings of the prophet' – since they are one and the same. This is why Allah says in the Qur'an "follow the prophet": in order that we should follow the Qur'an and practice the teachings of the Qur'an. However, the Qur'an warns us that if the prophet were to utter anything of his own, in his own words, and incorporate it into the Qur'an then he would be severely punished and no one would be able to save him.

We must clearly understand that to follow the prophet, as stated in the Qur'an, implies to follow what was inspired in him through revelations. This does not mean following what has been written regarding his sayings and practices by fallible people some 250 years later, and primarily collected by word of mouth. This literature, called the Hadiths, is full of contradictions with the Qur'an and that in itself is the proof that it has nothing to do with the prophet. To prove this point I have outlined some of the major contradictions of the Hadith literature with the Qur'an in a separate chapter of this book. We should never overlook the fact that, had the prophet been so keen on the importance of his own sayings he would have arranged to have these written down during his lifetime. At the very least his immediate companions would have done so had they been aware of such an intention. However, neither did so.

The Qur'an declares that those who follow and practice the guidance given in the Qur'an will be called 'Muslims', which means those who submit to the Will of Allah, as given in the Qur'an; and their way of life is called '**Islam**' meaning 'peace', i.e. living in full harmony with people of the world and also with the environment. The words

'Islam' and 'Muslim', therefore, have no sectarian connotation and will always remain universal in their implications. The Qur'an says very clearly that the names Islam and Muslim originated from the time of Prophet *Ibrahim* (Abraham) who was given the title of the Leader of Mankind. The Qur'an names many other prophets, including *Musa* (Moses) and *Isa* (Jesus), who came after *Ibrahim* (Abraham), and the last prophet named is Prophet Muhammad, and as there would be no other prophet after him, he is also known as the Seal of the Prophets.

The universal message given by Allah is the Qur'an, and as far as the believers are concerned it is their duty to pass the message i.e. the Qur'an, to others (**3:187**). The Qur'an states however that there must be no compulsion in its implementation, and acceptance or rejection of the Qur'an must be based on free will. This is why the Qur'an classifies people into two groups: (i) 'The believers' (***mumins***) who submit to the guidance given in the Qur'an, and (ii) 'the non-believers' (***kafirs***) who do not regard the Qur'an as the Word of Allah and hence do not follow its guidance. Yet it does not mean that the latter are condemned, as the door is always open to become a believer. '*Kafir*' is therefore not a derogatory word.

The Qur'an also claims very strongly that the revelation that was given to Prophet Muhammad is nothing new as the same book (*Al-Kitab*) was given to all the prophets. But because of human interference, all other existing books containing the Word of Allah got mixed up with the words of the prophets and of others, and this is why The Qur'an came as the last revelation, intact with the Word of Allah alone. The main teachings given to the

previous prophets are fully preserved in the Qur'an as the Qur'an claims that the same universal message was given to all the prophets. In this study I have included a chapter on the Jewish scriptures and the Bible, in order to clarify their importance with reference to the Qur'an. Other relevant topics are arranged in such a way as to give an overall picture of the Qur'an, so that if one is interested one can follow it up with further studies, culminating finally in the study of the Qur'an. One point must be clearly understood: the beauty (and unique reliability) of the Qur'an lies in the fact that in the case of any conflict or confusion arising from a translation of the Qur'an, one can always go back to the original Arabic words to check the validity of the translation. This is not possible with any other book of "religion" as the 'originals' of these books do not exist.

Regrettably, there have been many mistranslations of Qur'anic verses. I have used a chapter on this to point out some of these, with direct reference to the Arabic words, in conformity with their context. After all Allah says, in many verses, that **the best explanation is given by Allah** (re: 75:19; 41:3; 17:41; 17:89; 39:27; 18:54; 30:58; 6:65; etc.)

THIS STUDY IS ARRANGED IN A SEQUENTIAL MANNER, BUT THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS CAN BE READ INDEPENDENTLY. I sincerely hope that it will be read with an open mind and without bias, and that it will lead to a further study of the Qur'an, the final revelation of Allah for the guidance of mankind.

Note 1: The verse (*ayat*) numbers given for some chapters (suras) can vary by 1 or 2, either way, due to

slight variations in methods of numbering of verses by certain translators. The reader is requested to keep this in mind, particularly in consulting the translations by Yusuf Ali and G.A. Parwez.

Note 2: It is customary for Muslims to utter the phrase *'Alayhe-Sal-lamm'* which you may see as (*AS*) in some publications, and which means 'peace be upon him' (also abbreviated to '**pbuh**' in places) after the name of any prophet. I, therefore, hope that Muslims will do so when any prophet's name is read in this book.

Note3: I have used the word 'prophet' as the English translation for the Arabic *'nabi'*, as there is no truly equivalent word in English. A *nabi* receives *wahi* - or revelation - from Allah, whereas the word 'prophet' implies the capacity to foretell future events. The reader is requested to bear this distinction in mind.

Note 4: I have used the Arabic word Allah instead of God, the usual English translation, for the Sustainer of the whole universe. This is because the word 'Allah' is uniquely defined in the Qur'an and association of any partners with Him is strictly forbidden. He is One, but has many attributes like All-pervading, All-knowing, Beneficent, Merciful, etc.

Note 5: All Arabic words except Allah, Qur'an, sura, Islam and Muslim have been written in italics.

Note 6: All underlining, and words in bold or italics, are done by the author to make important points stand out.

Note 7: The reader is asked to bear in mind that in many verses of the Qur'an the 'royal we' is used; that is, Allah refers to Himself in the plural (We, Our, Ours). As in the case of royalty, this usage carries a singular sense, but with added dignity befitting royal personages. In the Qur'anic context its usage also indicates that Allah is not a person in our accepted, conventional sense.

2. KNOWLEDGE OF ARABIC AND ITS IMPORTANCE

As the Qur'an was revealed in Arabic, the importance of the knowledge of Arabic cannot be over emphasised. Even if one does not know or understand Arabic it is useful to know a few facts about the Arabic language.

Arabic is a very scientific language, in which the meaning of a word is based on its roots, which usually consist of three letters. 'Variations in shades of meaning are obtained, first by vowelling the simple root, and secondly by the addition of prefixes, suffixes and in-fixes. Thus, from the root *salima*, to be safe (literally, 'he was safe') we derive *sallama*, 'to deliver'; *aslama*, 'to submit' (also, to become a Muslim); *istalama*, 'to receive'; *istaslama*, 'to surrender'; *salamun*, 'peace'; *salamatun*, 'safety, well-being'; *muslimun*, 'a Muslim'.[1] It is an unfortunate fact that - only when one has a grasp of the structure of the language, and, in particular, when one knows the various derived forms of the verbs, both strong and weak - is one able to use an Arabic dictionary with ease, as all Arabic dictionaries enter words under their roots and only the roots are in alphabetical order. So those who have some grounding in Arabic can easily find the meaning of an Arabic word from its roots by consulting an Arabic-English dictionary or lexicon. For those who are interested in a deeper understanding of the Qur'an, it would be useful to have a concordance of the Qur'an, which lists all the verses in which a particular word appears, together with its root.

There is no doubt that for a deeper understanding of the Qur'an a knowledge of the Arabic language is absolutely essential. Such knowledge can be achieved easily if the language is taught in the early stages of schooling, particularly in countries in which the substantial majority is Muslim. As Europe has demonstrated, children are able to learn three or four languages without difficulty. There is no reason why this cannot be done in Muslim countries.

What the Muslim countries do is to teach the script in order to read the Qur'an parrot fashion - without really understanding it. In this connection I cannot help mentioning an incident in a big gathering where, at the opening ceremony, a *Hafez* (one who has memorised the whole Qur'an) was asked to recite some verses from the Qur'an, which he duely did. However, when he was asked to give the meaning he was not able to do so. As a matter of fact the Muslim countries have created an entire class of people who can read and recite the Qur'an in Arabic but who are totally illiterate as far as the actual guidance given in the Qur'an. Although Islam does not officially recognise priesthood, the result is the creation of a priesthood which is indoctrinated in the Hadiths in order to carry out the rituals and associated ceremonial functions. The Qur'an is only recited parrot fashion to invoke the blessings of Allah. Thus, a great revelation is now used mainly as a part of rituals!

For people without any knowledge of Arabic it is extremely vital to understand the concepts behind important Arabic words which cannot be translated into a single English word. A very good example is the word *deen* which is usually translated as 'religion' or *mazhab*-a conceptwhich in no way conveys the significance of *Deen*.

Often Arabic words have many different meanings, and to get a sensible meaning, one needs to look at the context in which the word appears in the verse. A list of useful words to check would be as follows: *Allah, anfiqu, deen, hamd, Islam, Kafir, Mumin, Muslim, Mushrik, Rabb, Rah'man, Raheem, riba, salat, sadaqat, taqwa*. The list can be increased as one acquires the confidence in their use and connotation. As examples, I am discussing the concepts behind 'Allah' and '*deen*' in some detail. Some of the other words above will be discussed briefly as part of the text.

Allah: This is the proper name of the Sustainer of the Universe. All other names denote His various attributes. The Qur'an gives some idea of Allah in sura **112** named *Al-Tauhid*, (The Unity), and is as follows:

> Say Allah is One, '*Ahad*'. Allah the independent, '*Samad*'. He does not give birth and nothing gave birth to him and there is nothing like Him at all.

We get a further idea of Allah from the root concepts. The root of the word 'Allah' is '*alif-lam-ha*' which has the following meaning and qualities: One from Whom someone seeks refuge, protection in a state of anxiety or bewilderment. One from Whose grandeur one becomes dazed and perplexed. One Whose overall sovereignty must be accepted and to Whom all subservience is due. One Who remains out of sight and One Who possesses exalted status.

> Keeping in view the above meanings/attributes, the name Allah, as it appears in the Qur'an, would mean a Being Who is supreme but remains hidden

> from human eyes; before Whose dignity and grandeur human perceptions/wisdom become dazed; Whose sovereignty extends over the entire universe; obedience to Whom is obligatory. By accepting Him, one must accept His sovereignty and obey His laws as given in the Qur'an.[2]

Deen: *Deen* (Islam) is usually wrongly translated as religion or *mazhab*. According to the Qur'an **Islam** is ***deen***, which means a code of life, a social system. The word *mazhab* has not been used anywhere in the Qur'an. It is, therefore, incorrect to define Islam as a religion or *mazhab*. *Mazhab*, in the literal sense, means a passage or path made by man, whereas *deen* is that code, law or system which comes from Allah alone. This is why there are so many different sects in *mazhab*, but none in *deen*. *Deen* revealed by Allah is universal in nature and there is no room for any sectarianism in it. Sects are made by man, not by Allah.

As G. A. Parwez remarks, the root meaning behind *deen* carries various concepts, such as: 'power, supremacy, ascendancy, sovereignty, lordship, dominion, law, constitution, mastery, government, realm, decision, definite outcome, reward and punishment. The word is also used in the sense of obedience, submission, allegiance. In the Qur'an this word is used in almost all the above meanings in as many as 79 verses.'[3]

So, why do we need *deen*? Allah says:

> **(2:213)** Mankind was one community, and Allah sent (unto them) prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and revealed therewith the

> Scripture with the truth that it might judge between mankind concerning that wherein they differed. And only those unto whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it, after clear proofs had come to them, through hatred of one another. And Allah by His will guided those who believed unto the truth of that concerning which they differed. Allah guideth whom He will unto a straight path.

The above verse makes the purpose of *deen* very clear: it is to unite human beings into one united nation. And this is only possible under a true Islamic state, based on the fundamental guidance of the Qur'an. Sadly, at present there is no such state in existence. What today purport to be Islamic states are merely nation states with national interests and ideologies.

References:

1. A New Arabic Grammar, by J.A. Haywood and H.M. Nahmud. Publisher Lund Humphries, London, p.1.
2. Exposition of the Qur'an, by Gulam Ahmed Parwez. Tolu-E-Islam Trust (Regd) 25B Gulberg, Lahore11, Pakistan, p.6.
3. Ibid., p.12.

3. BASIC RULES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE STUDY OF THE QUR'AN

Apart from the concepts behind crucial Arabic words, it is also necessary to follow a very important rule for the study of the Qur'an. This is given in the following sura:

> **(3:7)** Allah has sent down this Book to you, (O Prophet!) which includes verses of two kinds. The first consists of those verses which have definite meaning (***mohkamat***) and constitute the foundation of Allah's Laws. The second kind is allegorical (***mutashabihat***). But those in whose hearts is perversity, they follow the part of it which is allegorical, seeking to mislead and seeking to give it their own interpretation. But those well grounded in knowledge (*ilm*) say: "We believe in it, it is all from our Sustainer", but only men of understanding really heed.[1]

3.1 Verses which are clear and not subject to interpretation

This refers to the verses which are very easy to understand and not subject to any interpretation. Basically, these are laws, some of which can only be implemented in a real Islamic state, while others, particularly the moral codes, can be used for the development of further laws as well as for personal codes. Here are some examples:

(4:135) O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kindred, whether the case be of a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer to both than ye are. So follow not passion lest ye lapse from truth and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever informed of what ye do.

(6:152) And approach not the wealth of the orphan save with that which is better, till he reach maturity. Give full measure and full weight, in justice. We task not any soul beyond its scope. And if ye give your word, do justice thereunto, even though it be (against) a kinsman; and fulfil the covenant of Allah. This He commandeth you that haply ye may remember.

The above verses are self-explanatory and do not require the help of any other source like the Hadith, to explain them. The guidance in them is truly universal, but it will require a high degree of courage and moral conviction for anyone to practise them in real life. A large number of such verses, covering different areas in life, are given in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of chapter 6, *Basic Teachings of the Qur'an*.

3.2 Verses which are allegorical

Let us now look at the verses which are allegorical. The word 'allegorical' means describing one subject under the guise of another. In the present context this word applies to subjects of which we have no knowledge at present and therefore cannot explain their real meaning. People who

Finally, it is essential to note that Allah says in several verses that He has made the Qur'an easy to remember, and this is proved by the fact that countless people in the past, as well as at present, have memorised the whole of the Qur'an. As far as the fundamental verses are concerned, they are easy to understand, and these are the verses which should guide one's life in the real world, so that strife and division in human beings can be eliminated. Sadly our ways of living do not reflect these teachings, and we suffer as a consequence.

References:

1. Exposition of the Qur'an, by Gulam Ahmed Parwez. Tolu-E-Islam Trust (Regd) 25B Gulberg, Lahore-11, Pakistan. Verse (3:7).
2. The Bible The Qur'an and Science, by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris. p. 134-234.
3. Ibid., p. 174.
4. Ibid., p. 175.

4. EXPLANATION OF THE QUR'AN BY THE QUR'AN[1, 2]

As discussed in the previous chapter there are many verses in the Qur'an which are easy to understand and which should form the basis for our lives (for examples see sections 6.1 and 6.2). When looking to understand the Qur'an further we should bear in mind that Allah says in many verses that He will explain the Qur'an. A few of these verses are quoted below:

> **(75:19)** And that behold, it will be for Us to explain it. (*by-ya-nahu*)

> **(41:3)** A Book, the signs which have been explained in detail as a Qur'an in Arabic for people of knowledge to be a herald of glad tidings as well as a warning.

There are a number of points here: it is a Book which has been explained in detail and Allah is explaining it. Another important point is that it is for people of knowledge. Therefore, we must have the desire to understand the Qur'an by studying it, and thereby acquire knowledge with Allah's help.

> **(17:41)** We have explained (things) in various (ways) in the Qur'an, in order that they may receive admonition, but it only increases their flight from the truth.

1. Tafsir Al-Qur'an Bil Qur'an (Explanation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an): Lecture by Syed Mustafa Ali. Section based on the handout supplied.

2. Translations of the quoted Qur'anic verses are based on M.Pickthall and Yusuf Ali.

5. UNDERSTANDING THE FIRST SURA: *AL-FATIHA*, THE KEY TO THE QUR'AN[1]

Let us see why this first sura, *The Opening*, containing only seven verses is the key to the Qur'an. The first verse is usually translated as:

> **(1:1)** In the name of Allah, the Beneficent (*Rahman*), the Merciful (*Raheem*).

It begins with the name of Allah, Who is One and Unique. Here we cannot use *God* for *Allah*, as the word *God* means different things to different faiths (see chapter 2 for the Qur'anic use of the word *Allah*). In the above verse Allah is followed by two principal attributes: *Rahman* and *Raheem*. The word *Rahman*[A5] in Arabic implies **giver of benefits which are freely given** such as air, water, energy from the sun in the form of heat and light without which sustenance is impossible; and the word *Raheem*[A5] implies **the bestower of** mercy or **benefits which can only be acquired** by hard work and good deeds. Simply praying for Allah's mercy will not give these benefits.

The translation of the second verse is as follows:

> **(1:2)** Praise (*hamd*) be to Allah, the Sustainer (*Rabb*) of the whole universe (*alamin*).

The word *Hamd* means 'absolute praise' and 'absolute feeling of amazement', all directed towards Allah. Praise usually involves spontaneous appreciation of something

which can be perceived through our senses. As far as Allah is concerned we can only appreciate the feeling of *hamd* by reflecting on the marvels of His Creation. The word *rabb* cannot be translated as *Lord* as this word does not convey the full concept. It should be translated as the Nourisher and the Sustainer. Thus the real translation should be:

"Absolute praise, absolute feeling of amazement all directed towards Allah, who is the Nourisher and Sustainer of the entire Universe."

> **(1:3)** The Beneficent (*Rahman*), the Merciful (*Raheem*).

The third verse is a repetition of part of the first verse, reminding us once again, of the glorification of the two very important attributes of Allah. In fact it is one of the characteristics of the Qur'an to repeat and reinforce our understanding so that we do not forget.

The usual translation of the fourth verse is: (please see also the corresponding explanation below)

> **(1:4)** Lord (*Malek*) of the Day of Judgement (*Youmed-deen*).

Malek, 'the Sovereign', 'the Authority', 'the One Who is in control of all things', and ***Youmed-deen*, 'the age of the *Deen*'**, 'that age in which no power or individual will be able to oppress another human being'.

The fifth verse is translated as:

> **(1:5)** Thee alone we obey; Thee alone we ask for help. "Only You we obey and are subservient to You, and it is only You we return for help".

Obedience to Allah in reality means compliance with the laws contained in the Qur'an. It also implies that no one can intercede with Allah on our behalf, as it is to Him alone that we turn for help. When one utters this *Ayat*, he or she promises Allah that he or she will obey only Allah and ask for help from Him alone -- no 'pir' or 'faqir' (see chapter 9) is to be invoked after this commitment to Allah. After this commitment asking for help from others than Allah becomes ***Shirk*** (i.e. associating partners with Allah) which is strictly forbidden in Islam.

The sixth verse is as follows:

> **(1:6)** Guide us on the straight path

The 'straight path' (*sira-tul-musta-qeem*) is given in the Qur'an but treading on the right path or following Allah's guidance will require our own effort, as well as Allah's help and blessing.

The last verse is usually translated as:

> **(1:7)** The path of those Thou hast favoured; not (the path) of those who earn Thy anger, nor of those who go astray.

We are anxious that at the end of the journey we should find favour with Allah. We earnestly hope that the path we tread should prove to be the path trodden by those on whom He hast bestowed His favours, those who have not

incurred His displeasure, and those who have not gone astray.

This sura forms the principal part of our prayer as it contains all the main components of prayer, i.e. to praise and thank Allah and to plead for His Mercy. For this reason the sura is also recited on many other occasions, as our supplication to the Almighty.

It is important to remember that this sura gives a number of key words like *Allah, rabb, rahman, raheem, deen* etc. the implications of which need to be clearly understood individually as well as in the context of the verses themselves. The sura *Fatiha* is taken as the key to the Qur'an which opens up the whole of Allah's *Deen* and guidance in the rest of the Book. We must study this Book carefully and with an open mind. We must not be biased by our own opinion or by what others say. We must concentrate on what Allah has to say, and we will find that the Book will reveal itself to us as Allah Himself has promised. Like all worthwhile tasks it will be a slow process, but we can win

by patience and perseverance; and of course with Allah's help -- as the first sura signifies most accurately.

References:

1. Tafseer Al-Qur'an Bil Qur'an (Explanation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an): Lecture by Syed Mustafa Ali. Section based on the introductory part of the lecture.

6. BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE QUR'AN

The most fundamental messages in the Qur'an which apply to all mankind are: belief, prayer, and good deeds. The verses which contain the above themes are among the most frequent in the Qur'an. In order of frequency the following divisions can be made:

(i) Belief and good deeds

(ii) Prayer and good deeds

(iii) Prayer only

Two important conclusions can be drawn from the above.

1. 'Belief' and 'good deeds' are absolutely the basic requirement in Islam. Numerous verses confirm this. To believe in Allah is the primary requirement, and in this sense we must also believe in Allah's revelations, His messengers and the Day of Judgement.

> **(2:177)** It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East and West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth his wealth, for the love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask, and set slaves free; and is steadfast in prayer and invests in *zakat*. And those who keep their treaty when they make one and are

patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the Allah-fearing (*muttaqeen*).

2. Prayer is important, but has little value on its own without the good deeds. As a matter of fact every good deed is an act of obedience to Allah (*ibadat*, see Section 11.2) and even the work we do to earn our living, as long it is done honestly, is *ibadat*. The following verses give weight to the above assertions:

(4:95) Those of the **believers** who sit still, other than those who have a (disabling) hurt are not on an equality with those **who strive in the way of Allah** with their wealth and lives. Allah hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above the sedentary. Unto each Allah hath promised good, but He hath bestowed on those who strive a great reward above the sedentary.

(3:200) O ye who **believe**! Endure, out do all others in endurance, be ready, **and observe your duty to Allah**, in order that ye may succeed.

(4:124) And whoso does **good works**, whether male or female, **and** he (or she) is **a believer**, such will enter paradise and not the least injustice will be done to them.

(34:4) That He may reward those **who believe and do good works**. For them is a pardon and a rich provision.

Note: The Qur'an has many similar verses as above, including: 2:227; 5:9,93; 7:153; 4:57,122,124,173; 17:9; 18:2,30; 19:96; 20:75,112; 22:14,23,56; 24:55; 25:70; 29:7,9,58; 30:15,45.

The following two sections are taken from chapter seventeen of the book entitled *Educational Philosophy of the Holy Qur'an*, by Dr. Mahar Abdul Haq. The verses quoted from Dr. Haq are summarised, as he has done, instead of using the full verses. Also, the verses with similar implications have been classed together.

Section 6.1 takes a selection from the Qur'an which instructs us how to behave with family, friends, neighbours, relatives, acquaintances, and foreigners, as well as instructing us on our mode of living. Section 6.2 gives a selection of verses on human rights. The Qur'an is the first charter of liberty ever given to mankind. It enjoins the Islamic Order (*Deen*) to protect these rights irrespective of cast, creed, colour, gender, occupation or any other arbitrary differentiation.

All the verses used in these sections **are absolutely clear, without any ambiguity, and yet we concern ourselves more with the allegorical verses** which we have no knowledge of. Note Allah's Word on this:

> **(3:7)** He it is who hath revealed unto thee (Muhammad) the Scripture wherein are clear revelations -- They are the substance of the Book -- and others (which are) allegorical. But those in whose hearts is doubt, they pursue that which is allegorical seeking (to cause) dissension, by seeking to explain it. None knows its explanation

save Allah. And those who are of sound instruction say: We believe therein; the whole is from our Sustainer; but only men of understanding really heed.

6.1 Basic teachings on behaviour and conduct[1]

Mutual contacts, conduct and attitude

(4:86) When a (courteous) greetings is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy.

(24:61) Do it even if you enter your own houses.

(24:27) Or you enter other houses.

(25:63) Or even if an ignorant man addresses you.

(4:94) Say not to anyone who offers you a salutation, "You are not a believer"

(49:9) If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other, then you should fight against the party that transgresses until the other party complies with commands of Allah. But if the other party complies, make peace between them with justice, and be fair.

(49:10) All believers are brothers to each other.

(33:70) Always say what is directed to the Right (in a straightforward manner).

(22:30) Shun the word that is false.

(17:53) Say those things that are best.

(31:19) Speak fair to the people.

(31:19) Lower your voice and be moderate in your bearing.

(6:152) Whenever you give words, do justice even though it be against a kinsman.

(24:27) Enter not anyone's house without permission.

(2:42) Cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know what it is.

(31:18) Turn not thy cheek away from men in scorn, and walk not in the earth exultantly; Allah loves not any man proud and boastful.

(6:151) Come not near shameful deeds, whether open or secret.

(7:33) Avoid shameful deeds.

(23:3) Avoid vain talk and **(28:55)** Do not listen to vain talk.

(25:72) Witness no falsehood. If you have to pass by futility, pass by it with honourable avoidance.

(24:19) Do not spread scandal.

(17:37) Walk not on earth with insolence, for you cannot rend the earth asunder, nor reach the mountains in height. **(25:63)** Walk on earth in humility.

Back-biting, false accusation, jealousy, etc.

(4:148) Evil must not be noised abroad in public speech except where injustice has been done.

(49:11) Let not a folk deride a folk who may be better than they are. **(9:79)** No slandering and ridiculing.

(49:12) Avoid suspicion as far as possible and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs.

(49:11) Do not defame or be sarcastic to each other. Call not each other by offensive nicknames.

(24:4,23) Slander not chaste women.

(4:54) Envy not mankind for what Allah has given them of His bounty.

(24:12,15,16) Think of everybody as innocent till guilt is proved against him.

(49:6) If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth.

(4:112) If anyone earns a sin or a fault and throws it on to one who is innocent, he carries on himself both falsehood and a flagrant sin.

Health, cleanliness, eating and drinking

(2:247) Wisdom and health are better than abundant riches.

(16:69 & 26:80) If you fall ill, seek cure in Allah's laws.

(9:108) Purity in body, mind and heart. **(4:43 & 5:6)** Cleanliness.

(2:173; 5:3; 6:145; 16:115) Certain things such as pork and dead meat prohibited.

(5:90, 91) Strong drinks and wine prohibited.

(2:168) Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good. **(7:31)** Eat and drink but waste not by excess.

Husband-wife, children, parents, relatives, friends and neighbours

(30:31) "He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts)"

(25:74) "Wives and offspring be the comfort of our eyes". **(2:187)** Husband and wife should be like garments of each other.

(6:151) Be good to your parents.

(2:83) Treat with kindness your parents and kindred. **(17: 23, 24)** Do not rebuke your parents in their old age.

(17:26) Give the kinsman his due, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and squander not (thy wealth) in wantonness.

(4:36) Do good to neighbours whether relatives or not.

(4:36) Do good to the companions by your side.

Orphan and needy

(93:9) Treat not the orphan with harshness.

(6:152) Come not nigh to the property of the orphan except to improve it until he attains the age of full strength.

(2:83) Treat with kindness those in need.

(2:273) (Charity) is for those in need, who in Allah's cause, are restricted and cannot move about in the land, seeking. The ignorant men think because of their modesty, that they are free from

want. You shall know them by their mark: they do not beg of men with importunity.

(2:263-264) Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury.

Loans

(2:275) Usury is forbidden.

(2:282) Put in writing transactions involving future obligations.

(2:280) If a debtor is in difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if you remit it by way of charity, that is the best for you.

(5:1; 62:5) Keep your promises and fulfil obligations.

Miscellaneous

(6:141; 17:26,27,29 & 25:67) Tie not your hand (like a niggard's) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach.

(42:38) Dispose of your affairs by mutual consultation.

(5:2) Help one another in acts of righteousness and piety, but not in sin and rancour.

(6:70) Leave alone those who take their *Deen* to be mere play and amusement and are deceived by the life of this world.

(4:140) When you hear the Signs of Allah held in defiance and ridicule, you are not to sit with them unless they turn to a different theme.

(2:136,285; 3:84; 4:150,152) Make no distinctions between the prophets.

(18:29 & 2:256) No compulsion in your *Deen* (code of life).

(16:125) Invite all to the way of your Sustainer with wisdom and beautiful preaching: and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious.

(2:44) Do not enjoin right conduct on the people and forget to practise it yourself.

(3:167) Never be hypocritical, saying with lips what is not in the heart.

(5:100) Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle you.

(31:20, 45:12,13) Conquests of the universe for the welfare of mankind.

6.2 Human rights[2]

(33:35) Equality of sexes. (Also many other verses where men and women are both mentioned)

(46: 13, 19) Honour and respect is due only to that individual whose "deeds" qualify him for the distinction.

(3:79) No one can enslave another human being in any form of slavery.

(39:70) No one's fruits of labour will be denied or usurped or misappropriated. To every soul will be paid, in full, the earning of his "deeds"

(16:90) Justice must be done to everyone. **(4:58, 5:8)** Judge between mankind justly.

(6:152) And if ye give your word, do justice thereunto, even though it be (against) a kinsman.

(6:152) Each individual (rather every living being) has a right to claim essential necessities of life from the social order. **(16:90)** Equity is not enough. It must be supplemented by charitable kindness also.

(7:85; 17:35 & 6:152) Give full measure and weight, in justice.

(2:286) The burden of one cannot be placed upon the shoulders of another. Also, no burden can be placed upon a soul greater than it can bear.

(6:152 & 17:31) Each individual (rather, every living being) has a right to claim essential necessities of life from the social order.

(2:188; 5:32; 6:152) Protection of life and property. **(2:85)** No one can be banished from his home.

(24:2,4 & 33:59) Protection of chastity.

(7:32) Appreciation of beauty. Aesthetic taste.

(2: 256; 9:6; 10:99; 16:106, 125 & 18:29) Religious Freedom.

(4:148) The right of complaint for the oppressed to seek redress of his grievances.

(4:148) Protection against malevolent scandal and libel.

(24:12) The accused to be considered innocent unless proved guilty.

(6:165) Personal responsibility. **(17:34)** Fulfilment of all promises, engagement and obligations.

(2: 205) Protection of crops and progeny.

(2:217, 3:99) No one can be obstructed from the path of Allah.

(17:20) Allah's free bounties must not be withheld or closed to anyone.

(30:22) Differences in colours and languages are signs of Allah. They must not be exploited for the disunity of mankind.

Note: The list in 6.1 and 6.2 is not exhaustive.

References:

1. Educational Philosophy of the Holy Qur'an, by Dr. Mahar Abdul Haq.Published by Naushaba Publications, D.D.A. Flats, New Ranjit Nagar, New Delhi - 110008. p. 194-201.
2. Ibid., p. 192,193.

7. THE PROPHETS AND THEIR REVELATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The following paragraph is a brief extract of a translation from Urdu of *Tazkirah* (Man's Destiny) by Allama Mashriqi. *Tazkirah* is a higher commentary on the Qur'an, which the author describes as the 'last message of God to Man', and an exhaustive exposition of the Divine Law or what he calls the 'Religion of Nature'. Most of the material in this section is taken from the chapter of the 'Unity of Divine Message' in *Tazkirah*. The rest of this section deals with some of the well-known prophets in Qur'an. It demonstrates beyond a shadow of doubt that the fundamental message preached by all the prophets was the same in spite of variations in customs and rituals throughout the different world communities. I quote Mashriqi:

> The last of the Revealed books (the Holy Qur'an) gave a straight verdict on humanity's present disintegrated form, in fact, on the reality of Religion, by declaring that customs and rituals are one thing but the FUNDAMENTAL REALITY another. 'O ye human beings! We have appointed for each people an outward semblance of its worship of God and obedience to His Law, which it is following, but the Fundamental Law is the same for everybody (and it is unity). Thus, the people should not dispute with you on the Fundamental Law. You assemble the entire

> mankind on one point by inviting them to One God, and through this *Tauheed* unite the whole world. Verily, in establishing this unity between world communities you are on the Right Course'. **(22:67)**. This shows that creation of conflict over God's Law by disputing over rituals means abdicating the straight path and Religion. [1]

Thus, the basic message of all the prophets from Allah was to further the unity of mankind, along with guidance on how human beings should live in this world in order to bring peace and security, and hence ensure our survival and stability. This was the substance of the great news which the prophets received from the Almighty, and this is the essence of true prophethood. This, too, is the supreme knowledge and information, the greatest of revelations and disclosures.

The Prophets taught Man the proper way to live on the earth; they showed him the path to collective survival and stated the principles determining the rise and fall of nations. They demonstrated the Divine Administration's complete sense of justice, and evaluated punishment in this world and recompense in the Hereafter. They explained what the individual's conduct should be; they put their people on **the right path** and ensured their stability and survival for centuries to come, and they demonstrated how non-believers would meet their end. This was the *Deen* they brought, and it was the *Deen* (course of action) which God wanted mankind to adopt.

Thus, it is Man's correct course of conduct in the world which, in fact, is his 'religion', and it is his bounden duty to comprehend the Immutable Law which governs the rise

and fall of nations. The knowledge of this alone constitutes the science of religions and it is this course which is everybody's most urgent need.

No prophet carved out a contrary course, a new Faith or a different religion. Each came with essentially one message. That message was the Divine Law. Humanity's failure to follow that Law resulted in their periodic destruction. Subsequent generations mistook the exteriors and procedures which were only devices – or method – for following the Divine Law, as the fundamentals of the *Deen*; they accepted subsidiaries as the fundamental code and ignored the basic reality, becoming entirely concerned with the superficial and the conventional. People unduly exaggerated in the display of personal devotion and deference to their leaders, attaching increasing importance to the commandments of their own liking. They considered it a slant against their traditions and honour to give up the rituals of one prophet and enter the fold of a new one. Then, instead of following, through the prophets, the Divine Law and taking this Law as the true source of knowledge, they lined up on sectarian grounds behind the various prophets, thus becoming partisan. Instead of believing and submitting to the will of God and thereby becoming true Muslims they became Mosesites, Buddhists, Christians and Mohammedans. They considered it part-and-parcel of the *Deen* merely to heap praises on the prophets and idolise them in their activities. In this way, Religion came to denote only a few useless rituals and baseless customs; its significance completely disappeared.[2]

7.2 Adam

The first man created by God - according to the Scriptures - is Adam. God also created a wife for Adam, and the whole of humanity is supposed to have descended from them. Adam is also regarded as the first prophet as he received guidance in the form of revelation from God after he and his wife were evicted from Paradise for disobedience to His command. This traditional interpretation, that humanity, as we see today, descended from Adam and his wife, is untenable for biological and other reasons. Therefore, we have to look for an allegorical interpretation. The one used by Parwez [3] appears to fit very well with the story described in the Qur'an in verses **2:30-39**. In this story, Adam stands for Man and his wife for Woman, the angels (*Malaika*) for the forces of nature, *Iblees* or *Shaitan* (Devil) for baser human desires.

Man was given autonomy and free will, unlike the forces of nature which do not have any independent will and, therefore, have to be subservient to Allah. Although nothing in 'nature' obeys Man, he can obviously learn to channel its workings to his advantage. When Man was made to settle on earth at first his needs were very limited and the means of subsistence plentiful. However, the baser instincts of Man eventually got the better of him. Driven by selfishness, human beings began to live according to their own self-made systems. As a result, they lost their blissful life. Humanity was split into different races, tribes and nations, with enmity amongst them. When man lost his blissful life, he was told:

> **(7:35)** O children of Adam! If messengers of your own come unto you, who narrate unto you My revelations, then whosoever refraineth from evil

and amendeth - there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve.

(20:124) But he who turneth away from remembrance of Me, his will be a narrow life, and I shall bring him blind to the assembly on the Day of Resurrection.

7.3 Prophets named in the Qur'an

The Qur'an mentions the following prophets (messengers) by name: *Adam* (Adam), *Nuh* (Noah), *Ibrahim* (Abraham), *Ishmael* (Ishmael), *Ishaq* (Isaac), *Lut* (Lot), *Yakub* (Jacob), *Yusuf* (Joseph), *Musa* (Moses), *Harun* (Arron), *Dawud* (David), *Sulaiman* (Soloman), *Illyas* (Elijah), *Alyasa* (Elisha), *Yunus* (Johana), *Ayyub* (Job), *Zakariya* (Zackaray), *Yahya* (John), *Isa* (Jesus), *Idris* (Enoch), *Hud Dhul Kifl* (Ezekiel), *Shuaib*, *Salih*, *Luqman* and *Muhammad* (Muhammad).

The Qur'an also states that apart from the prophets mentioned above, Allah sent many other prophets whose names are not mentioned in the Qur'an.

(40: 78) Verily we sent messengers before thee, among them those of whom We have told thee, and some of them We have not told thee; and it was not given to any messenger that he should bring a portent save by Allah's leave, but when Allah's commandment cometh (the cause) is judged aright, and the followers of vanity will then be lost.

7.4. Noah

Noah follows Adam in the line of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an. The most important event that took place during the time of Noah is the Flood. The following comments on 'the Flood' are from Dr. Maurice Bucaille's book, *The Bible The Qur'an and Science*.

> The Qur'an gives a general version which is different from that contained in the Bible and does not give rise to any criticisms from a historical point of view [...] It does not provide a continuous narration of the Flood. Numerous Suras talk of the punishment inflicted upon Noah's people. The most complete account of this is in Sura 11, verses 25 to 49. Sura 71 which bears Noah's name, describes above all Noah's preaching, as do verses 105 to 115, Sura 26. Before going into the actual course taken by the events, we must consider the Flood as described in the Qur'an by relating it to the general context of punishment God inflicted on communities guilty of gravely infringing His commandments. [...] Whereas the Bible describes a universal Flood intended to punish ungodly humanity as a whole, the Qur'an, in contrast, mentions several punishments inflicted on certain specifically defined communities.[4]

7.5 Abraham

The Qur'an contains a large number of verses on Abraham, and I start with a few:

> **(2:124)** And (remember) when his Sustainer tried Abraham with (His) commands, and he fulfilled

them, He said: Lo! I have appointed thee **a leader for mankind.** (Abraham said): And of my offspring (will there be leaders)? He said: My covenant includeth not wrong-doers.

(37:100-110) O my Sustainer! Vouchsafe me of the righteous. So We gave him tidings of a gentle son. And when (his son) was old enough to walk with him, (Abraham said) O my dear son, I have seen a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allah willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast. Then when they had both surrendered (to Allah), and he had put his forehead down, We called unto him: O Abraham! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision. Lo! thus do We reward the good. Lo! that verily was a clear test. Then We redeemed him with a tremendous (*azim*) sacrifice, and left him thus to be remembered among later generations. Peace be unto Abraham. Thus do we reward the good.

The word ***'azim'*** means 'tremendous' or 'mighty'. Thus, it is highly improbable that this sacrifice refers to the ram which Abraham found and slaughtered in place of Isaac (*Ishaq*) (see Genesis 22:13; also chapter 18 below). The following two verses state clearly the duty or the responsibility which both Abraham and Ismael were to undertake, in view of their total submission to the Will of Allah. The tremendous sacrifice asked for by Allah is that both should work for the cause of Allah. Unfortunately, Muslims believe the Biblical story, involving a ram, and think that they will be able to redeem themselves by sacrificing millions of animals at the end of *Hajj*

(pilgrimage). By ignoring the Qur'an, they fail to realise that the real sacrifice required by Allah from the believers is to work for the cause of Allah, steadfastly.

> **(2:125)** And when We made the House (at Mecca) a resort for mankind and a sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood (to pray). And We imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ishmael, (saying): Purify My House for those who go round and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship).
>
> **(2:127,128)** And Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, (Abraham prayed): Our Sustainer! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower. Our Sustainer! make us submissive unto Thee and our seed a nation submissive unto Thee, and show us our ways of worship, and relent towards us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Relenting, the Merciful.
>
> **(22:27)** And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine.

(19:54) And make mention of Ishmael in this Scripture. Lo! he was a keeper of his promise, and he was a messenger (of Allah), a Prophet.

To fulfil his obligations Abraham settled some of his family near the *Kaba.*

> **(14:37)** O our Sustainer! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by the Sacred House in order, O our Sustainer, that they may establish regular prayer: So fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits in order that they may be thankful.

Abraham was further blessed by another son in his old age as shown in the following verse.

> **(37:112,113)** And We gave him tidings of the birth of Isaac, a prophet of the righteous. And We blessed him and Isaac. And of their seed are some who do good, and some who plainly wrong themselves.

We also see from the Qur'an that **with Abraham some important landmarks of 'Islam' took place.** He was instructed to build the House of Allah (*Kaba*) with his son Ishmael, and to introduce the religious practices such as Prayer (*Salat*), Fasting, Pilgrimage (*Hajj*), and *Zakat*. In fact all our main religious practices originated with Abraham. The belief in Allah alone, Who has no partner, remained the primary condition of Faith, and the code of life ('religion' in the comprehensive sense) to be practised by mankind was given the name *Islam*.

The meaning of the word Islam is 'submission' and 'peace' - 'submission' in the positive sense of committing oneself 'to live in peace' by bringing one's likes and dislikes and behaviour in harmony with the Divine Will. A Muslim is one who surrenders himself to Allah. Thus, the terms Islam and Muslim both originate from the very first

contact of God with Man, and pre-date Muhammad by many centuries.

> **(3:19)** With Allah the Deen is Al-Islam[...]
>
> **(3:67)** Abraham was not a Jew, nor yet a Christian; but he was an upright man who had surrendered (to Allah), and he was not of the idolaters.
>
> **(2:130,131)** And who forsaketh the religion of Abraham save him who befooleth himself? Verily, We chose him in the world and lo! in the Hereafter he is among the righteous. When his Sustainer said unto him: Surrender! he said I have surrendered to the Sustainer of the Worlds.
>
> **(22:78)** And strive for Allah with the endeavour which is His right. He hath chosen you and hath not laid upon you in religion [this code of life] any hardship; the faith of your father Abraham (is yours). He hath named you Muslims (those who have surrendered) of old time and in this (Scripture), that the messenger may be a witness against you, and that ye may be a witness against Mankind. So establish worship, and invest in *Zakat*, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protecting Friend. A blessed Patron and a blessed Helper!

It should be borne in mind that the traditional use of the terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim' for the followers of the Prophet Muhammad is a contradiction with the Qur'an. Both these terms are universal in connotation and are

meant for the whole of Mankind through all the ages of the history. Thus according to the Qur'an, Allah's reward is not reserved for any particular group or 'denomination' but is open to anyone who consciously accepts the oneness of Allah, surrenders himself to his Will, and by living righteously gives practical effect to this attitude.

> **(2:62)** Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee Muhammad) and those who are Jews, and Christians and Sabians -- whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and do righteous deeds - their reward is with their Sustainer, and there shall no fear come upon them and neither shall they grieve.

The Sabians are a monotheistic religious group which to this day can be found in Iraq.

> **(2:111,112)** And they say: None entereth Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian. These are their own desires. Say: bring your proof (of what you state) if ye are truthful. Nay, but whosoever surrendereth his purpose to Allah while doing good, his reward is with his Sustainer; and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

Islam, therefore, is a continuation of original code of life (*deen*) as established by the first prophet. All succeeding prophets preached the same code of life (*deen*). From Abraham came a long line of prophets through his two sons, Ishmael (*Ishmael*) and Isaac (*Ishaq*). Ishmael was the progenitor of the Arab peoples and Muhammad was among his descendants. From Isaac came a number of

prophets, including his son Jacob (*Yakub*), his grandson Joseph (*Yusuf*), Moses (*Musa*), David (*Dawud*), Solomon (*Sulaiman*), John the Baptist (*Yahya*) and Jesus (*Isa*).

> **(2:132-134)** The same did Abraham enjoin upon his sons and also Jacob, (saying): O my sons! Lo! Allah hath chosen for you the (true) religion [this code of life]; therefore die not save as men who have surrendered (unto Him). Or were ye present when death came to Jacob, when he said to his sons: What will ye worship after me? They said: We will worship thy God, the God of thy fathers Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, One God, and unto Him we have surrendered. Those are a people who have passed away. Theirs is that which they earned, and yours is that which ye earn. And ye will not be asked of what they used to do.

> **(2:136)** Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophets received from their Sustainer. **We make no distinction between them,** and unto Him we have surrendered.

7.6 Moses

The Qur'an not only goes into great details about the life story of Moses but also about the history of the Jewish people. However, the historical content is not so much

stating history chronologically as emphasising again and again to mankind that Allah favours only those who do not deviate from the guidance given by Allah, through His prophets. There is no such thing as a favoured nation, as the Israelis think of themselves even to this day. To gain Allah's favour it is absolutely essential to follow His guidance and live accordingly.

The real history of the Jewish people starts with Isaac, but it is from the time of arrival of Joseph and his family in Egypt that we begin to see things more clearly. The Qur'an is characteristically not concerned with dates but rather with the moral side of the story of Joseph (*Yusuf*) which is beautifully illustrated and occupies the whole of Sura 12.

At the time of Moses the Jewish people were obviously well established in Egypt, and were certainly being persecuted, but the Qur'an does not elaborate on the period that elapses between the time of Joseph and the arrival of Moses. Instead, it goes into great detail about the sort of persecution the Jewish people were undergoing and how Allah - through the Prophet Moses - saved the Jewish people by taking them out of Egypt, destroying Pharaoh and his people at the same time. The story of Moses is a beautiful example of the way the Almighty carries out His plan in the face of overwhelming odds. This story has great similarity with the Biblical story of Exodus with one fundamental difference: that the body of the drowning Pharaoh was saved by the Will of Allah from destruction to become a sign for humanity. As stated clearly in the Qur'an:

> **(10:90, 91)** And we brought the Children of Israel across the sea, and Pharaoh with his hosts pursued them in rebellion and transgression till, when the (fate of) drowning overtook him, he exclaimed: I believe that there is no God save Him in Whom the Children of Israel believe, and I am of those who surrender (unto Him). What! Now! When hitherto thou hast rebelled and been of the wrong-doers? But this day We save thee in thy body that thou mayest be a sign for those after thee. Lo! most mankind are heedless of Our signs.

I quote further from Dr. Maurice Bucaille: 'It is always desirable for man to apply himself to the preservation of relics of his history, but here we have something which goes beyond that: it is the material presence of the mummified body (discovered in 1898) of the man who knew Moses, resisted his pleas, pursued him as he took flight, and lost his life in the process. His earthly remains were saved by the Will of God from destruction to become a sign for man, as it is written in the Qur'an. Those who seek among modern data for the proof of the veracity of the Holy Scriptures will find a magnificent illustration of verses of the Qur'an dealing with the Pharaoh's body by visiting the Royal Mummies Room of the Egyptian Museum, Cairo!'[5]

According to the Qur'an Moses received the Message from Allah directly. The major part of **Sura 20** is an exchange between him and Allah. The Qur'an also mentions that the Jews were originally the chosen people of Allah, but they broke their Covenant with Allah several times and were eventually cursed. A good example of this is when Moses was called to the mountains for 40 days to

receive the Tablets inscribed with commandments from Allah. While Moses was away his people became bored, making a golden calf by melting their jewellery, which they then began to worship. They did this while ignoring all pleas from Aron (*Harun*), the brother of Moses. When Moses returned and found that his people had resorted to idolatry he became very angry. He chastised them for their lapse, but eventually asked for forgiveness from Allah on their behalf. This time, as well as on many other occasions, Allah forgave them.

> **(7:148-150)** And of the folk of Moses, after (he had left them), chose a calf (for worship), (made) out of their ornaments, of saffron hue, which gave a lowing sound. Saw they not that it spake not unto them nor guided them to any way? They chose it, and became wrong-doers. And when they feared the consequences thereof and saw that they had gone astray, they said: Unless our Sustainer have mercy on us, we verily are the lost. And when Moses returned unto his people, angry and grieved, he said: Evil is that (course) which ye took after I had left you. Would ye hasten on the judgement of your Sustainer? And he cast down the tablets, and seized his brother by the head, dragging him toward him. He said: Son of my mother! the folk did judge me weak and almost killed me. Oh, make not mine enemies to triumph over me and place not me among the evil doers!

> **(7:152-156)** Lo, those who chose the calf (for worship), terror and humiliation from their Sustainer will come upon them in the life of the world. Thus do we requite those who invent a lie.

> But those who do ill deeds and afterward repent and believe -- lo! for them, afterward, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. Then, when the anger of Moses abated, he took up the tablets, and in their inscription there was guidance and mercy for all those who fear their Sustainer. And Moses chose of his people seventy men for Our appointed meeting place and, when the trembling came on them, he said: O my Sustainer! If You had willed, You could have destroyed them long before, and me with them. Will You destroy us for that which the ignorant among us did? It is but Your trial (of us). You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protecting Friend, therefore, forgive us and have mercy on us, You are the Best of all who show forgiveness. And ordain for us in this world that which is good, and in the Hereafter (that which is good). We have repented to you. Allah said: My retribution befalls whomsoever I will and, and My mercy embraces all things, therefore I shall ordain it for those who ward off (evil) and invest in *Zakat*, and those who believe in Our revelations.

Eventually Allah withdrew all favours from the Israelis because of the constant breaking of their Covenant with Allah. The following verses which are typical of the many similar verses, give the reasons for withdrawal of Allah's favour from the Jewish people.

> **(5:12,13)** Allah made a Covenant of old with the Children of Israel and We raised among them twelve chieftains, and Allah said: Lo! I am with you. If ye establish worship and invest in *Zakat*,

> and believe in My messengers and support them, and lend unto Allah a goodly loan, surely I shall remit your sins, and surely I shall bring you into gardens underneath which rivers flow. Whoso among you disbelieveth after this will go astray from a plain road. And because of their breaking their covenant, We have cursed them and made hard their hearts, they change words from their context and forget a part of that whereof they were admonished. Thou wilt not cease to discover treachery from all save a few of them. But bear with them and pardon them. Lo! Allah loveth the kindly.
>
> **(4:161)** And of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people's wealth by false pretences. We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom.
>
> **(5:66)** If they had observed the Torah and the Gospel (*Injil*) and that which was revealed unto them from their Sustainer, they would surely have been nourished from above them and from beneath their feet. Among them are people who are moderate, but many of them are of evil conduct.

It was during the time of Solomon that the Jewish people attained their greatest prosperity after which they disintegrated, and to this day they would have remained so but for the creation of Israel with the tacit backing of the UK and the USA. The present conflict in Palestine is unlikely to be resolved unless there is some compromise from the Israeli side. This is unlikely to happen if one looks at some of the Mosaic laws (see section 18.5 iii). By

taking advantage of its strong position (see also chapter 12, section 12.2.i , 4th paragraph), Israel, with U.S. backing, is driving the Palestinians into virtual slavery. In the long run this will bring the Israelis down, for simply going against the laws of Allah.

7.7 Jesus

Jesus was sent not only to reform the Jewish people from their deviation from the path of Allah but also to bring back the universal message of the unity of mankind and this particular feature of his preaching made the Jewish people antagonistic to Jesus. It was their firm belief that they were the favoured people of Allah and that their Scripture, the Torah, confirmed it.

Allah sent the Gospel (*Injil*) through Jesus to put mankind back on the true path. The writings we have which appeared from 70 (C.E. Christian Era) onwards were based on oral traditions and were written by several people at different periods of time. Enevitably, given their distance in time from the real Jesus, the personal bias of each writer came into their writings. Many works with many countless contradictions between them were in circulation. Eventually, four works from this number were arbitrarily canonised, which today are known as the Gospels. These four works are certainly not the same Gospel (*Injil*) of Jesus as mentioned in the Qur'an.

Modern biblical scholars are also of the opinion that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are not the authors of the four Gospels but rather titles attributed to compilations of diverse materials already collected by others. Obviously, the possibility clearly exists that in the process of

compiling these doubtful works, ideas directly repugnant to the preaching of Jesus entered the text (see chapter 18). The so-called Gospels contain many contradictions, one prime example being the purported ascension of Jesus. Neither 'Matthew' nor 'John' speak of Jesus' ascension. 'Luke' mentions the ascension with reference to time, whereas 'Mark' does not give any clue as to when this occurrence was supposed to have happened.

Considered literally, the birth of Jesus without his mother Mary having had any physical relationship with a man appears to be a miracle. However, to explain further we need to consider the circumstances in which Mary grew up. From her very childhood she was living in a sanctuary under the guardianship of Zacharias (3:37). Below, I quote from *The Holy Qur'an* by Maulana Muhammad Ali, who in his commentary on his translation, says the following:

> 'Verse 3:45 clearly gives her news of the birth of a child and therefore the particular incident referred to in 3:44 is the incident of her marriage. The casting of lots and the contention as to who would have her in his charge could not mean anything but her charge as a wife. Lots were evidently cast because as a child she had been dedicated to the sanctuary (temple), and it is now by a lot only that she could be given away in marriage.[6]
>
> 'Thus in verse (3:45) quoted below, when she was given the good news of a son being born to her, she was perhaps not informed that her marriage had been decided. Hence, she says that man had not touched her yet. And she was told in reply,

'Even so'; i.e., the child will be born by Allah bringing about the circumstances which result in the birth of a child. The words do not show that she would conceive out of the ordinary course of nature. Nor do the words that follow prove anything beyond the simple fact that Mary must give birth to a son in accordance with the prophecy. The whole of creation is brought about, we are told again and again, by the divine word *Kun* (Be), yet no one supposes that creation is not brought about according to the laws of nature.[7]

(3:45-47) (And remember) when the angels said: O Mary! Lo! Allah giveth thee glad tidings of a word from Him, whose name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, illustrious in the world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near (unto Allah). He will speak unto mankind in his cradle and in his manhood, and he is of the righteous. She said: O my Sustainer! How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me? (The angel) answered: Thus it is: Allah creates what He wills: when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, 'Be' -- and it is.

'It is remarkable that the Qur'an makes no mention at all of Mary's husband, and in this respect, these circumstances bear a strong resemblance to those connected with Moses' birth, for there, too, no mention at all is made of Moses' father. The mere fact, therefore, that there is no mention of Jesus' father is not sufficient to show that Jesus had no father.'[8]

Note: 'Speak unto mankind from cradle' could be an allegorical way of saying that Jesus would preach from an early age (see also 19:29-34). As far as his birth is concerned, **the verses remain allegorical** as with our present state of knowledge we cannot fully explain them. The following verses fall into the same category:

> **(3:48, 49)** And He will teach him the Scripture and wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel *(Injil)*. And will make him a messenger unto the children of Israel, (saying) Lo! I come unto you with a sign from your Sustainer. Lo! I fashion for you out of clay the likeness of a bird, and I breathe into it and it is a bird, by Allah's leave. I heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and I raise the dead, by Allah's leave. And I announce unto you what ye eat and what ye store up in your houses. Lo! herein verily is a portent for you, if ye are to be believers.

Muhammad Asad in his translation of the Qur'an gives some explanation of these from which I quote his footnote 38.

It is probable that the 'raising of the dead' by Jesus is a metaphorical description of his giving new life to people who were spiritually dead; cf. (6:122) - 'Is then he who is dead [in spirit], and whom We thereupon gave life, and for whom We set up a light whereby he can see his way among men - [is he then] like unto one [who is lost] in darkness deep, out of which he cannot emerge?' If this interpretation is -- as I believe -- correct, then the 'healing of the blind and the leper' has a similar significance:

namely, an inner regeneration of people who were spiritually diseased and blind to the truth.[9]

The Qur'an contains many verses on the prophethood of Jesus.

> **(3:50,51)** And (I come) confirming that which was before me of the *Torah*, and to make lawful some of that which was forbidden unto you. I come unto you with a sign from your Sustainer, so keep your duty to Allah and obey me. Lo! Allah is my Sustainer and your Sustainer, so worship Him. That is a straight path.
>
> **(61:14)** O ye who believe! Be Allah's helpers, even as Jesus, son of Mary, said unto the disciples: Who are my helpers for Allah? They said: We are Allah's helpers. And a party of the Children of Israel believed, while a party disbelieved. Then We strengthened those who believed against their foe, and they became the uppermost.
>
> **(3:52)** But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We will be Allah's helpers. We believe in Allah, and bear thou witness that we have surrendered (unto Him).
>
> **(3:54,55)** And they (the disbelievers) schemed and Allah schemed (against them): and Allah is the best of the schemers. Lo! Allah said: O Jesus! Verily, I shall cause thee to die, and shall exalt thee unto Me, and cleanse thee of (the presence of) those who are bent on denying the truth, and

> am setting those who follow thee above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. In the end, unto Me you all must return, and I shall judge between you with regard to all on which you were wont to differ.

'The disbelievers schemed' -- here referring to those among the Jews who refused to acknowledge Jesus as a prophet and secretly plotted to crucify him. Allah on the other hand, devised the means to protect him. He assured Jesus that he would fulfil his mission and die a natural death. His followers were weak, but eventually they were to overcome their enemies and become victorious. In fact, verse 61:14 above confirms that Jesus completed his mission. In other words he established the *Deen* and his followers were *Muslims*. But with time, the message again became corrupted due to human interference, and the followers not only deviated from the true path but became divided into sects.

> **(5:46)** And We caused Jesus, son of Mary, to follow in their footsteps, confirming that which was (revealed) before him in the *Torah*, and We bestowed on him the Gospel (*Injil*) wherein is guidance and a light, confirming that which was (revealed) before it in the *Torah* - a guidance and an admonition unto those who ward off (evil).

> **(4:171)** O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His

messengers, and say not 'Three' - Cease! (it is) better for you! -- Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender.

(5:72) They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Sustainer and your Sustainer. Lo! whoso ascribeth partners unto Allah, for him Allah hath forbidden paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers.

(5:75) The Messiah, son of Mary, was none other than a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) had passed away before him. And his mother was a saintly woman. And they both used to eat (earthly) food. See how We make the revelations clear for them, and see how they are turned away!

(5:116) And when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? he saith: Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right. If I used to say it, then Thou knewest it. Thou knowest what is in my mind, and I know not what is in Thy Mind. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Knower of Things Hidden.

(61:6) And when Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah unto you, confirming that which was

> (revealed) before me in the Torah, and bringing good tidings of a messenger who cometh after me, whose name shall be Ahmad (the Praised One). Yet when he hath come unto them with clear proofs, they say: This is mere magic.

In the above verse the name Ahmad refers to the coming of Prophet Muhammad. I quote: 'This prediction is supported by several references in the Gospel of St. John to the *Parakletos* (usually rendered as 'Comforter') who was to come after Jesus. This designation is almost certainly a corruption of *Periklytos* (the much Praised, an exact Greek translation of the Aramaic term or name *Mawhamana* [...]'[10]

Jesus' ministry lasted about three years. The end of his life on earth is as much a mystery as his birth. The Qur'an (in verse 4: 157 given below) says categorically that Jesus was not crucified nor killed by the Jews, in spite of certain apparent circumstances which produced that illusion. The Christian Churches make it a cardinal point of their doctrine that Jesus died on the Cross and was buried, but on the third day he rose in the body with his wounds intact, and walked about and conversed, and ate with his disciples, and was afterwards taken up bodily to heaven. Also, in the course of time a legend grew up that Jesus had died on the cross in order to atone for the 'Original Sin' with which mankind is allegedly burdened. The Qur'an does not agree with any of these points.

> **(4:157)** And because of their (i.e. Jews') saying: We slew the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, Allah's messenger - **They slew him not nor crucified, but it appeared so unto them;** and lo! those who

> disagree concerning it (i.e. Christians) are in doubt thereof; they have no knowledge save pursuit of conjecture; they (i.e. Jews) slew him not for certain.

7.8 Muhammad

After Jesus, there is a long gap before the arrival of Muhammad. He was sent as the last prophet to deliver the guidance from Allah. The guidance Muhammad brought for Mankind is given in the Qur'an. The Qur'an was written down and compiled as a book during the lifetime of the Prophet. It was also memorised by many during the lifetime of the Prophet. Thus it is the only Book of Revelation which has remained totally intact, whereas the Scriptures brought by the previous prophets were not written down during their lifetime and were manifestly corrupted by human interference. Moreover, the Qur'an was sent as a guidance for all mankind and not for one section of people. The Qur'an is the last Revelation of Allah to mankind, a Book which has remained intact, untainted by human interference, and the Prophet Muhammad was the last messenger to receive revelation from Allah. The Qur'an describes him as the 'seal of the prophets'.

> **(33:40)** Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and **the Seal of the Prophets**; and Allah is aware of all things.

The Hadith literature creates doubt about the authenticity of the Qur'an by stating that the Qur'an, as a book, was compiled during the time of Caliph Othman by collecting

all the Qur'anic sheets which were with different people. Yet, when Allah constantly refers to the Qur'an as a book (*Al-Kitab*) which was set down in writing as it was revealed, it is impossible to believe that the Prophet did not manage to compile the Qur'an as a book, over the time period of 23 years it took for the Qur'an to be fully revealed. Such thinking is a reflection of the total inability of a large number of Muslims to think beyond what is written in the Hadith literature i.e. in this instance, that the Qur'an was compiled during the time of Othman.

Leaving aside the claims which the Qur'an itself makes of itself as a book we can turn to the purely historical perspective. We know for certain that at the time of Jesus the Mediterranean world already had great libraries, bookshops, and many professional writers (scribes). As Arabia was a trading route, and the Arabs were a trading nation, there is a compelling body of evidence to draw one to the view that the Arabs had literate members of their society just like other countries in the region, for good, sound economic reasons if nothing else, and that the Qur'an was written down and compiled as a book (*kitab*) during the life time of the Prophet just as it – the Qur'an – claims. This argument becomes unassailable when one recalls that this Messenger, sent as he was some 600 years after Jesus, was a man renowned for his fear of God and faithfulness to his duty. Is it feasible that he would have omitted to take basic measures for the preservation of the text! How much more plausible than the hearsay assertion (through many tellers) that it took Othman to collate the text out of a motley collection of pages from here and there, as the Hadith literature would have it!

Another misconception about the Prophet is that he was illiterate, that is, that he could neither read nor write. The Qur'an refutes this concept. Please see Appendix 6 (A6) for explanation.

To understand how the Qur'an was transmitted to Muhammad we need to look at the following verses:

> **(2: 97)** Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): Who is an enemy to Gabriel! For he it is who hath revealed (this Scripture) to thy heart by Allah's leave, confirming that which was (revealed) before it, and a guidance and glad tidings to believers;
>
> **(16: 2)** He sendeth down the angels with the Spirit of His command unto whom He will of His bondsmen, (saying), Warn mankind that there is no God save Me, so keep your duty unto Me.
>
> **(16: 102)** The Holy Spirit (i.e. Gabriel) hath revealed it from thy Sustainer with truth, that it may confirm (the faith of) those who believe, and as guidance and good tidings for those who have surrendered (to Allah).
>
> **(26:192-194)** And lo! It is a revelation of the Sustainer of the Universe, which the True Spirit has brought down upon thy heart, that thou mayest be (one) of the warners.
>
> **(12:3)** We narrate unto thee (Muhammad) the best of narratives in that We have inspired in thee this Qur'an, though before this you were totally unaware.

From verses 2:97; 16:2,102; 26:92-194; we are left in no doubt that the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad was brought through Gabriel (*Jibreel*).[A1] Further, in verse 12:3 above and in verses 3:44; 4:163; 6:19,50,106; 7:203; 10:2,15,109; 11:49; 12:3,102; 13:30; 16:2,123; 17:39; 73,85; 18:110; 20:13; 21:45,108; 28:86; 29:45; 33:2; 35:31; 41: 6; 42:3,7,13,52; 43:43; 46:9,53:4; Allah states that the Qur'an was sent as an inspiration (***Wahi***) to Muhammad, and inspiration (*Wahi*) is the way in which Allah deals with mankind as shown by the following verses:

> **(4: 163)** Lo! We inspire thee as We inspired Noah and the Prophets after him, as We inspired Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We inspired unto David the Psalms.
>
> **(7: 117)** And We inspired Moses (saying): "Throw thy staff!" And lo! It swallowed up their lying show.
>
> **(16: 68)** And thy Sustainer inspired the bee, saying: choose thou habitations in the hills and in the trees and in that which they thatch.

Thus Allah sends His revelation to whomsoever He chooses, and the method used by Him is selective and instantaneous such as in verse 7:117 where Moses is inspired to throw the staff. The angels simply carry Allah's message and obey His command but they have no power to think on their own. According to my understanding the angels or spirits appear similar to radio

waves which carry the messages (*Wahi* or revelation) which is then received by the person or being to whom Allah sends His revelation. It is like the transmission of a message, we can send to any person via radio telephone, the Internet or email, provided we know the address of the recipient.

As far as the revelations to Muhammad were concerned, he had no power to change any message. He was instructed to follow the Qur'an with the warning that he would be punished if he deviated from the guidance given in the Qur'an. The following verses are clear indication of this and, incidentally, constitute another point against the Hadith literature.

> **(10:15)** And when Our clear revelations are recited unto them, they who look not for the meeting with Us say: Bring a Lecture other than this, or change it. Say (O Muhammad): **It is not for me to change it on my own accord**. I only follow that which is inspired in me. Lo! If I disobey my Sustainer I fear the retribution of an awful day.
>
> **(69:40-52) That is indeed the speech of an illustrious messenger**. It is not poet's speech - little is it that ye believe! Nor diviner's speech - little is it that ye remember! It is a revelation from the Sustainer of the Universe. And if he had invented false sayings concerning Us, We assuredly had taken him by the right hand and then severed his life-artery, and not one of you could have held Us off from him. And lo! It is a warrant unto those who ward off (evil). And lo! We know

> that some among you will deny (it). And lo! It is indeed an anguish for the disbelievers. And lo! It is absolute truth. So glorify the name of thy Tremendous Sustainer.
>
> **(6: 50)** Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen. I say not unto you: Lo! I am an angel. I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye then not take thought?

All the verses I have quoted so far show clearly that the revelation that came to Muhammad was inspired in him by Allah, the Sustainer of the universe. The result of those inspirations is the Qur'an over which he had no power to change anything. Outside this (i.e. when not under Divine Inspiration) he was simply a human being, albeit a human being with excellent qualities and conduct.

A point is often raised that the Qur'an specifically says in a number of verses to 'obey the Prophet'. Examples of such verses are as follows:

> **(3: 32)** Say: obey Allah and the messenger. But if they turn away, lo! Allah loveth not the disbelievers (in His guidance).
>
> **(3:132)** And obey Allah and the messenger, that ye may find mercy.
>
> **(4:13)** These are the limits (imposed by) Allah. Whoso obeyeth Allah and His messenger, He will

make him enter gardens underneath which rivers flow, where such will dwell forever. That will be the great success.

(4: 59) O ye who believe! Obey Allah and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the messenger if ye are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.

Verses similar to above, which ask people to obey the Prophet are given in: 4:69; 5:92; 8:1, 20, 24, 46; 9:71; 24: 42, 47, 51,54, 56; 33:33; 47:33; 49:7,14; 58:13; 64:12.

One must note that all the above verses relate to the time when the Prophet was alive and therefore was not only Allah's messenger but also the political leader of his people. In fact verse 4:59 asks us to obey other leaders as well. That being the case, it seems clear that 'obedience to the Prophet' must be understood in that context i.e. in the case where he is physically present and leading the community of believers. As far as we are concerned, the Prophet is dead, and therefore, he cannot function as a messenger now.

The only truthful way that we can obey or follow him is by obeying the guidance given in the Qur'an. This is explained clearly in sura 69 verses 40-52, as given above. In these verses Allah explains, that the Qur'an, the Word of Allah, is the utterance or the sayings of the Prophet. In this case, there is no difference between the Word of Allah and the sayings of the Prophet. They are one and the same thing. As the Qur'an is a complete code of

guidance for mankind, by following it we automatically follow the Prophet, or practise what he taught during the 23 years of his prophetic life. Allah also warned the Prophet that if he said or practised anything which was against the teachings of the Qur'an he would be punished and that no one would be able to save him. We, therefore, know for sure that the only thing he taught and practised must be what is in the Qur'an.

One does not have to wait very long as a Muslim before one hears the expression '*Sunnah* of the Prophet'. It is vital in this connection to understand the actual meaning of the word *sunnah* in the context of the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam (more details in section 10.1). The real meaning of the word ***Sunnah* according to the Qur'an (48:23) is** '[...]Law and Practice of Allah which is immutable or unchangeable'. In fact, in the whole of the Qur'an the word *Sunnah* has not been used even once in connection with the Prophet. Also, as already established, what the Prophet practised is in the Qur'an and so any *Sunnat* attributed to the Prophet must also emanate from the Qur'an.

Unfortunately, in a quest to obey the Prophet, people became interested in what the Prophet is reported to have said and practised. To this end a vast amount of literature known as the *Hadiths* were written, in the main, about 250 years after the death of the Prophet. These Hadiths are taken as the reported sayings and practices of the Prophet, collected in written form after a long existence in the oral tradition, being handed down by word of mouth from one generation to another. As shown in section 10.3 there are many Hadiths which contradict the Qur'an and, as such, could not have been uttered by the Prophet, (at

least, not if one genuinely regards of the Qur'an as true) since he would have been punished (see verses 10:15 and 69:44-47). **The simple answer to the phrase 'Obey the Prophet' is to obey what came out directly from the Prophet's mouth. The only sure document which fits this description is the Qur'an. It simply cannot refer to the Hadiths. These were written nearly 250 years later, and both in spirit and in substance greatly contradict the Qur'an – a Book which claims to be sent and protected by Allah (15:9) and, as such, to have no internal contradiction or fault.**

One can understand the weakness of people in idolising the Prophet, particularly as this has happened with the prophets who came before him.

The main function of all the prophets was to convey the Message of Allah but, in the Qur'an alone, has the original message remained unaltered. Here, Allah has made the Message clear for us in the form of verses which are applicable to our day-to-day lives. They are made absolutely clear so that there is no difficulty in following them. However, to lead a life according to the Qur'an requires honesty and sincerity since our natural selfishness hinders us from following the straight path it sets us. And yet, regrettably, we get busy with our rituals, often performing them mechanically, and without much conscious effort or sacrifice.

There is one verse in the Qur'an which is often used wrongly by many people. Through misinterpretation and ignorance this verse causes millions of Muslims to glorify the Prophet against his will, instead of glorifying Allah: A

few translations of this verse together with comments are given below:

> **(33: 56)** God and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye who believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect. (Yusuf Ali)

Comment by Yusuf Ali: God and His angels honour and bless the holy Prophet as the greatest of men. We are asked to honour and bless him all the more because he took upon himself to suffer the sorrows and afflictions of this life in order to guide us to God's Mercy and the highest inner life.

> **(33: 56)** Lo! Allah and His angels shower blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! Ask blessings on him and salute him with a worthy salutation. (M. Pickthall)

M. Pickthall has no comments on this verse.

> **(33: 56)** Verily, God and His angels bless the Prophet: [hence] O you who have attained to faith, bless him and give yourselves up [to his guidance] in utter self-surrender! (M. Asad)

M. Asad has no comments on this verse.

However in the same sura, but 13 verses ahead of the above verse, we find that Allah and His angels send blessings **to all the believers:**

> **(33:41-43)** O ye who believe! Celebrate the praises of Allah, and do this often; and glorify Him

> morning and evening. He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: And He is Full of Mercy to the believers.

Thus, Allah and his angels not only shower blessings on the Prophet but also on all the believers. Similarly we who believe, are therefore asked to shower blessings on the Prophet, and the Prophet, too, is asked to do the same on all the believers:

> **(9:103)** [...]and pray for them: behold, thy prayer will be (a source of comfort) to them - for Allah is All-Hearing All-Knowing.

Considering the above verses, we become even more aware that to solicit peace for all (*Sallam*) and to lead a life according to Allah's guidance with a view to establishing peace, is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. For verse 33:56 any other explanation based on the Hadiths is not credible. Also, we cannot salute the Prophet now as he is dead. Without question, it was possible when he was alive. However, most Muslims ignore this simple fact and assume that the Prophet's spirit appears during some ceremonial functions. They, therefore, stand up and sing "O Prophet we salute you...". Their words also include sayings such as "Allah would not have created the world if Muhammad were not created" thereby implying all other Prophets are less significant. Similarly, we need to consider that whenever we mention the Prophet or utter his name we say "*Sal-lallaahu-alayhe-wa-sal-lamm* = The blessings of Allah and peace be upon him", whereas in the case of other prophets we say "*Alayhe-sal-lamm* = Peace be upon him". This means

that we are discriminating against the other prophets in favour of Muhammad, a practice which is forbidden by the Qur'an. The Qur'an is very clear on this issue as shown in verses 2:136, 285; 3: 84; 4:150-152; of which the last three are quoted below. They emphasise the fact that if we make a distinction between the prophets then we become 'disbelievers' and we will be subjected to a 'shameful doom'. Thus, Yusuf Ali's comment on verse 33: 56 that the Prophet is the greatest of men is at variance with the Qur'an and is, therefore, unacceptable.

> **(4:150-152)** Those who deny Allah and His messengers, and wish to separate Allah from His messengers, saying: 'We believe in some but reject others and wish to choose a way in between'; Such are disbelievers in truth; and for disbelievers We have prepared a shameful doom. But those who believe in Allah and His Messengers and **make no distinction between them**, unto them Allah will give their wages; Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

Yet, through the misinterpretation of verse (33:56) we constantly commemorate Muhammad, instead of commemorating Allah, as enjoined in the following verses:

> **(33: 41,42)** O ye who believe! Remember Allah with much remembrance, and glorify Him early and late.

The glorification of Muhammad has reached such a high level that most Muslims believe that Muhammad has been given the power of intercession (see section 10.3,

selection no. 8). Despite the Qur'an's assertion that the Prophet possesses no power to benefit anyone or harm anyone (7:188, 46:9), the Hadith literature succeeded in duping many people into believing in the concept of intercession. There, Bukhari and Muslim state categorically that the Prophet has been given the right of intercession (section 10.3, selection no. 8). Contrary to this spurious hearsay, the Qur'an informs us that, on the Last Day, instead of interceding on behalf of his followers before Allah, the Prophet will disown them for not taking the guidance of the Qur'an seriously.

> **(25:30) And the messenger saith: O my Sustainer! Lo! mine own people made this Qur'an of no account.**

I hope the preceding discussion on Prophet Muhammad will clear up some of the misconceptions that Muslims hold about him generally. They forget that the Qur'an is Allah's Book of guidance for the whole of mankind and that the Prophet's role as a messenger was simply to pass on this message, just as the role of any other messenger before him was to pass on a message. The Qur'an is self-explanatory as far as the basic rules of guidance are concerned and does not require any other source or model in order to be understood. Muhammad was a man entrusted with the mission of transmitting the message of Allah to mankind and he fulfilled this mission admirably, never ascribing to himself any importance greater than this, that is, if one takes what the Qur'an has to say on the subject seriously:

> **(18:110)** Say (O Muhammad): I am only a mortal like you. My Sustainer inspireth in me that your

God is only One God. And whoever hopeth for the meeting with His Sustainer, let him do righteous work, and make none sharer of the worship due unto his Sustainer.

(41:9) Say (unto them O Muhammad): I am no new thing among the messengers (of Allah), nor know I what will be done with me or you. I do but follow that which is inspired in me, and I am but a plain warner.

(7:188) Say: for myself I have no power to benefit, nor power to hurt, save that which Allah willeth. Had I knowledge of the Unseen, I should have abundance of good fortune, and no harm would have afflicted me. I am but a warner, and bearer of good tidings unto folk who believe.

(41:6) Say (unto them O Muhammad): I am only a mortal like you. It is inspired in me that your God is One God, therefore take the straight path unto Him and seek forgiveness of Him. And woe unto the idolaters.

References:

1. *Man's Destiny* (Tazkira), by Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Al-Mashriqi. Translated and edited from Urdu by Shabbir Hussain. Publisher: Mujahid Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. p. 56, 57.
2. *God, Man and Universe*, by Inayat Ullah Khan El-Mashriqi. Akhuwat Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
Extract from *Unity of Divine Message* p. 26-35.
3. *Exposition of the Qur'an*, by Gulam Ahmed Parwez. Tolu-E-Islam Trust (Regd) 25B Gulberg, Lahore-11, Pakistan. p. 11.
4. *The Bible The Qur'an and Science*, by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.

Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris. p. 233.
5. Ibid,. p. 256.
6. *The Holy Qur'an* by Maulana Muhammad Ali.
Published in USA by Specialty Promotions Co. Inc. Chicago, Illinois. p. 141, note 422.
7. Ibid,. p. 143, note 427.
8. Ibid,. p142-143, note 424.
9. *The Message of the Quran*, by Muhammad Asad.
Published by Dar Al-Andalus, Gibralter. p. 74. Footnote 38
10. Ibid,. p. 861. Footnote 6.

8. TOPICS APPARENTLY CONTROVERSIAL

This chapter covers some very important topics mentioned in the Qur'an but which are often misrepresented in the Western press in order to label Islam barbarous or out-dated. Sadly, the Muslim states have never presented a believable case to the contrary, rather, preferring to misuse the following concepts in order to underpin and enhance their temporal authority.

8.1 Punishment for stealing

The last few years have seen the introduction of 'Islamic Law' (*Shariah* or *Shariat*) in some countries which call themselves Islamic States. One law in particular, quite often labelled by the West as barbaric, is the severing of a hand for theft. The so-called Islamic States which carry out these punishments do so for various political reasons, primarily to create fear and to hold on to power. Unfortunately, they go unquestioned, simply due to the fact that most people in the countries in question have no solid grounding in the Qur'anic injunctions regarding these issues.

According to the Qur'an, any punishment should fit the crime. The Qur'an says:

> **(5:45)** And We prescribed for them therein: The life for the life, and the eye for the eye, and the nose for the nose, and the ear for the ear, and the tooth for the tooth, and for wounds of retaliation.

> But whoso forgoeth it (in the way of charity) it shall be expiation (atonement for past sins) for him. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed; such are wrong-doers.

If we are to follow the Qur'anic guidance that the punishment should fit the crime, then we cannot cut off the hand of a person who has stolen wealth as such a punishment would be utterly inconsistent with the nature of the original offence. Rather, we have to look very carefully at the verses which deal with this issue. The Law regarding this punishment is given in **verses 5:38,39.** In verse 38 the word *yad* is translated in its literal sense as 'hand'. However, besides 'hand' the word *yad* also means 'strength of hands', 'power', 'property', 'wealth', 'blessings', 'obligation', and 'support'. Many Arabic words contain such multiple meanings and it is important to note that the appropriate meaning will always depend on the context in which it is used. Here the context is stealing (i.e. of wealth) and therefore for the punishment to fit the crime wealth should be recompensed for wealth and not 'hand' for 'wealth'. The thief should be given a punishment where he is made to give up his wealth to make good the loss of the person he has robbed. Hence the following translation of the verse, as given by the late Ahmed Ali Khan Jullundri in his translation and commentary of the Qur'an, is accurate:[1]

> **(5:38)** As for the thieves, male or female, cut off their means of support and favours, take away their wealth and what they have hoarded, and make their hands and strength work (for the person whom they have robbed till the price of the stolen goods and some fine is recovered), an

> exemplary punishment from Allah for their serious crime and Allah is Mighty, Over-powering and the Possessor of great knowledge and He is the best disposer.[2]

The above translation also makes clear sense of the verse that follows it.

> **(5:39)** But if the thief has repented and returned all the stolen goods and has mended himself, then truly Allah turns to him in forgiveness; surely Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

On the other hand **if verse 5:38 is translated literally to mean cutting off the physical hand, then verse 5:39 cannot be sustained logically**. It would be ridiculous to suggest that Allah turns to a repentant thief who is now minus a hand! How is forgiveness appropriate after such a heavy penalty! However, we are told that if the thief returns the stolen goods and repents and reforms then he should be forgiven. This facility is directly at odds with any thought of cutting off a limb as a means of retribution, since such an action is irreversible.

In fact, in a truly Islamic State the question of cutting off a hand would not arise at all. There would be social justice and the State would act as trustee for the entire population. Hunger, injustice and poverty would be eliminated, as the wealth would be used for the benefit of the people. Further, the Qur'an states quite clearly that any such crime must be forgiven if there are mitigating circumstances i.e. poverty, hunger etc., as stated in the following verse:

> **(5:3)** [...]whoso is forced by hunger, not by will, to sin: (for him) lo! Allah is forgiving, Merciful.

So how can these verses ever be construed to advocate the cutting off of a hand? In tracking down the cause, for the mistranslation of verse 5:38 we need look no further than the prolific Hadith compilers who 'report' this un-Qur'anic retribution for theft (Bukhari 5.597, Muslim 4190, Abu Daud 4367, 4396).

8.2 Adultery (see 10.3)

8.3 Does the Qur'an sanction the beating of women?

Even in the best of marriages there are bound to be occasional discord or ill-will. In extreme and unjust circumstances this can sometimes result in the wife being beaten by the husband. This is beyond question a lamentable fact. However, the seemingly justification for this outrage which is attributed to a particular Qur'anic verse stems from the misinterpretation of the verse in question - 4:34 – which, construed through a particular prism is made to seem to allow this. Let me quote the traditional translation of the verse and then explain why it is wrong.

> **(4:34)** [...]as for those women on whose part ye fear rebellion ***(nushuz)***, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, (and last) beat ***(adriboo)*** them. Then, if they obey you, seek not a way against them.

The key to the problem is the mistranslation of the two key words *nushuz* and *adriboo*. Some of the possible

meanings for both the words, according to the lexicon,[3] are given below. Again, the appropriate meaning will depend on the context of the verse.

Nushuz: Animosity, hostility, rebellion, ill-treatment, discord; violation of marital duties on the part of either husband or wife.

Adriboo (root: *daraba*): to beat, to strike, to hit, to separate, to part.

In the context of the above verse the most appropriate meaning for *nushuz* is **'marital discord'** (ill-will, animosity etc), and for *adriboo* is **'to separate' or 'to part'**. Otherwise, it is inviting the likelihood of a divorce without any reconciliation procedure. Such a step would blatently contravene the Qur'anic guidance shown in verse 4:35 below. Therefore, a more accurate and consistent translation of the above verse would be:

> **(4:34)** [...]as for those women whose animosity or ill-will you have reason to fear, then leave them alone in bed, and then separate; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek a way against them.

The separation could be temporary or permanent depending on the reconciliation procedure Such as construction is legitimate within the terms of the language and fits in very well with the divorce procedure outlined in the Qur'an (see 8.5).

The verse following the above verse gives further weight to the above translation.

> **(4:35)** And if ye fear a breach between them twain (the man and the wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo! Allah is ever Knower, Aware.

Added weight to the meanings outlined above is given by verse 4:128 quoted below. Here, in the case of a man, the same word *mushuz* is used, but it is rendered as 'ill-treatment' as against 'rebellion' in the case of a woman as shown earlier in the traditional translation of verse 4:34. One find oneself asking whether since the ill-treatment is on the part of the husband, a process of reconciliation is here to be encouraged!

> **(4:128)** If a wife fears ill-treatment ***(nushuz)*** or desertion on her husband's part, there is no blame on them if they arrange an amicable settlement between themselves; and such settlement is best[...]

This, obviously, is a double standard and the only way to reconcile the meanings of the two verses, in the contexts they are being used, is to accept the meaning of *adriboo* as: 'to separate' or to 'part'. In this connection I would like to refer the reader to an excellent article by Rachael Tibbet from which I quote:

(a) Qur'anic commentators and translators experience problems with the term *Adribu* in the Qur'an not just in this verse but in others, as it is used in different contexts in ways which appear ambiguous and open to widely different translations into English. '*Daraba*' can be translated in more than a hundred different ways.

(b) The translation of *adribu* as 'to strike' in this particular verse (4:34) is founded upon nothing more than:

(i) The authority of hadiths (Abu Daud 2141 and Mishkat Al-Masabih 0276) that this is what *Adribu* means in this context.

(ii) The prejudices and environment of the early commentators of the Qur'an which led them to assume that 'to strike', given the overall context of the verse, was the most likely interpretation of the many possible interpretations of *adribu*.[4]

8.4 Women's rights

There is a great deal of misconception in the West about women's rights in Islam. This is hardly surprising when you consider the widespread ignorance of what the Qur'an actually teaches, both among Muslims and non-Muslims. Added to this is also the fact that the Western democracies quite often pride themselves on the freedom and equal rights given to the women in the West. It is important to examine this claim and to find out what happens in reality. Perhaps it would be easier to understand the real position of women in Western society by outlining some of the facts and then show how Islam treats women, according to the Qur'an.

Taking Great Britain as an example the following facts emerge:

1. Although women outnumber men they occupy very few high-ranking jobs. Even in comparable jobs, they are not

paid the same rate as men. *Labour Market Trends*, (December 1998, p. 626) shows that adult average gross weekly pay of full-time employees in Great Britain, in April 1998, was £506 for non-manual men and £330 for non-manual women; manual men received £328 and manual women £221.

2. Given a total of over six hundred M.Ps. in Parliament the number of women M.Ps. is insignificant, and the same can be said for the House of Lords. *Social trends* (28, 1998, p. 229) shows that at the end of November 1997 women MPs in Parliament were only 18% of the total.

3. The commercial exploitation of sex is widespread and the sexual abuse that goes with it is often hushed up in the name of 'freedom'. In addition to which, women are more sexually exploited than men, sexually provocative images of women being used to sell everything from fizzy drinks to cars.

4. The unlimited sexual freedom that goes on in social life results in very high divorce rates. The philosophy being that all is well so long as one does not get into trouble. The moral side of sex is completely ignored. The following are some of the statistics from *Social Trends* (28, 1998, p. 41).

> Cohabitation: Around a quarter men and women who had ever been married had cohabited before their first marriage, while 69% had cohabited before a second marriage.

> Families: Lone parents headed around 21% of all families with dependent children in Great Britain in 1996, a figure which had tripled since 1971.
>
> Households: The number of households in Great Britain comprising a married couple with dependent children has fallen over the last 35 years, from 38% in 1971 to 25% in 1996-97.

5. Last but not least is the commercial exploitation of pornographic materials, including blue video films. These are widely available in the name of 'freedom of choice'. It is difficult to calculate the price women pay for being conned into the use of their body by unscrupulous men.

My reason for making the above points is to show that the West's claim of freedom and equality for women is simply a myth. If we examine women's rights in the Qur'an then we can see a fundamental difference in approach. The Qur'an deals with the reality of human existence as it is and protects the rights of women in that context. It is not hypocritical like some 'religious' persons who try to insist that these realities do not exist. Despite this, the accusation is often made against the Qur'an that men and women are not regarded as equal. The verses often quoted in support of this view are as follows:

> **(2:228)** [...]the rights of the wives (with regard to their husbands) are equal to their (husbands') rights with regard to them, although men have a degree (of advantage) over them. Allah is Almighty, Wise. (see note on page 96)

> **(4:34)** Men are the maintainers of women, because Allah hath made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for support of women)[...]
>
> **(2:282)** O ye who believe! When ye contract a debt for a fixed term, record it in writing. Let a scribe record it in writing between you in (terms of) equity[...]. And call to witness, from among your men, two witnesses. And if two men are not (at hand) then a man and two women, of such as ye approve as witnesses, so that if the one erreth the other will remember[...]

Regarding the first two verses, it is necessary to examine Allah's role in human affairs. The Qur'an provides clarification on this point in verses: 20:50, 16:68, 6:38, 24:41, 41:12 and many others, of which 20:50 is quoted below.

> **(20: 50)** [...]Our Rabb is He who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature, and further gave (it) guidance.

Thus, according to verse 20:50, Man has been given a form and nature by Allah which is distinct from that of Woman. It is plain both from the Qur'an and plain common sense that the form and nature of Man and Woman is complementary, and a respect of each other in this matter is the best possible compromise for a balanced and happy life together. However, this distinction in form and nature must not be equated with an intellectual pre-eminence on the part of the man and certainly no

suggestion is made in the Qur'an to the contrary (see verse 33:35, as quoted later).

One of the forms given to the man is physical strength, by virtue of which he, statistically, plays a dominant role as maintainers (but not as rulers as has been portrayed in some translations of the Qur'an). To counter the dominant role of the man the Qur'an has encouraged economic independence of the woman in the sense that a woman's earnings are entirely her own and need not be mixed with family expenses.

> **(4:32)** [...]unto men a fortune from that which they have earned, and unto women a fortune from that which they have earned, (envy not one another) but ask of Allah His bounty. Lo! Allah is ever Knower of all things.

In reality men tend to have, statistically speaking, the upper- hand in society in view of the control they exercise in almost all spheres of life. This is not to say that women will never occupy the highest jobs in the country but, speaking statistically, men will always occupy the highest proportion of important jobs in most societies and therefore will exercise their economic and financial control over women. However, this does not mean that the women are intellectually or - come to that - *spiritually* inferior. The Qur'an makes this abundantly clear in the following verses:

> **(33:35)** Lo! Men who surrender unto Allah, and women who surrender, and men who believe and women who believe, and men who obey and women who obey, and men who speak the truth

> and women who speak the truth, and men who persevere (in righteousness) and women who persevere, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their modesty and women who guard (their modesty), and men who remember Allah much and women who remember -- Allah hath prepared for them forgiveness and a reward.
>
> **(16:97)** Whosoever doeth right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily We shall quicken with good life, and We shall pay them a recompense in proportion to the best of what they used to do.

Thus the woman has been given the same capacity in Islam -- to be or to do what the man can. As for the criticism with reference to verse (2:282) quoted before (i.e. why two women witnesses are required to replace one man) there are a number of logically sustainable answers of which I give two below:

Even for men the Qur'an has prescribed the condition of TWO men to appear as witnesses in a court of law. If some deficiency remains in one witness's statement, the other can make it up -- that is to make good a probable deficiency. It is a sort of confirmation of one statement by the other. Similar is the case of two women as witnesses. Shyness is a specific feature of women as compared to men. Under this circumstance she certainly needs another woman whom she knows, to stand by her side and corroborate the evidence.[5]

The verse 2:282 refers only to the financial or business transactions (whereas in verse 24.8 we see that woman alone can be a witness). Since men are traditionally the breadwinners and are legally responsible for the maintenance of the family, it is logical to assume that they would be (statistically speaking) more familiar with commercial transactions. To protect a woman's business interest, it is recommended that she have a co-witness. It should be noted that the same recommendation is made for a man.[6]

The Qur'an disapproves of divorce but accepts it is necessary when all other measures have failed. In this connection, the Qur'an has cautioned believers to be very careful with regard to it, and has pointed out the steps that the spouses have to take for reconciliation, in cases of serious discord between them. In fact, the procedure for divorce in Islam is such as to encourage reconciliation (see 8.5).

On the question of marriage there is usually a misconception that in Islam a man can marry four wives at the same time. This misconception comes from the Hadith literature. The fact is that the Qur'an encourages monogamy and regards polygamy as an exception (see 8.6). The main point to consider is that, although men have more power and influence in society, women must be treated equally in terms of all humane considerations. The Qur'an gives strong guidance on our everyday behaviour and strong warnings if we choose to ignore them.

Verses 7-13 of sura 4 deal with laws and rules of inheritance. However, it is important to note that the

inheritance, in all cases, applies only after the deceased's will has been executed and his debts have been paid. As far as the women's share is concerned, in general they are entitled to half the share of that given to men. This seems unfair only when viewed superficially and out of the context of other Qur'anic directives. In order to understand more fully, we must remember that the woman is allowed to keep her whole share for herself alone, whereas the man must maintain his family from out of his portion. Verse 4:34 (already quoted in this section) confirms this. Note also the following verse:

> **(2:233)** Mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years; (that is) for those who wish to complete the suckling. The duty of feeding and clothing nursing mothers in a seemly manner is upon the father of the child. No one should be charged beyond one's capacity.

Many other verses indicate that in Allah's eyes -- men and women are treated equally. These should give us a clear guidance for our own behaviour. The principle of equality is observed even in the case of reward and punishment, as stated below:

> **(48:5,6)** That He may bring the believing men and the believing women into gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide, and may remit from them their evil deeds -- That in the sight of Allah, is the Supreme Triumph -- And may punish the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women, and the idolatrous men and the idolatrous women, who think an evil thought concerning Allah[...]

In fact, verses similar to the above are met often in the Qur'an. Yet a point is often made by the Qur'an's detractors (as a supposed instance of male chauvinism) that it contains verses which state that believing men in heaven are granted companions with wide lovely eyes (*houri*). This is mainly due to mistranslation and misinterpretation of the the following verses:

> **(2:25)** [...] There for them are pure companions (***zauj***); there forever they abide.
>
> **(44:54)** Even so (it will be). And We shall wed them unto companions (*zauj*) with wide lovely eyes ***(hur-ayyin)***.
>
> **(52:20)** Reclining on ranged couches. And we wed them unto companions (*zauj*) with wide lovely eyes *(hur-ayyin)*.
>
> **(56:22-24)** And (there are) companions (*zauj*) with wide, lovely eyes *(hur-ayyin)*, like unto hidden pearls, reward for what they used to do.

The word *zauj* means "one of a pair", and can apply to either of the two sexes. Therefore, instead of translating this word as "one of a pair" it would be better to use the word "companions" which can apply to both, either male or female.

The accurate translation of the word ***hur*** means "marked contrast between the white of the cornea and and the black of the iris". Therefore the nearest translation of *hur-ayyin* can be "with wide lovely eyes". Further, the word

hur is a plural word and can apply to both male and female. Its feminine is *haura* and masculine is *ahwar*.

Hence the references made to the above verses are for the righteous believers where no specific distinction is made for male or female.

Regarding veiling of women in public life there is no mention in the Qur'an that women must completely cover themselves in the presence of others. In fact, modesty is for both men and women, with more emphasis being placed on women owing to their vulnerable position in society (see 8.7). Muslim social life excludes having boyfriends and girlfriends, free sexual mixing, dancing between men and women, taking alcohol and such other things from which pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships frequently develop.

Finally, we must clarify quite strongly that women occupy a very important position in the family by caring for and holding the family together. The loving relationship between the grandparents and the children, and the parents and their children, gives lasting stability to the children in their later life; and in all these women hold a most prominent position.

> **(31: 14)** And we have enjoined upon man concerning his parents -- his mother beareth him in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is two years -- give thanks unto Me and unto thy parents. Unto Me is the journeying.

8.5 Divorce and reconciliation procedure[7]

It is sometimes said that divorce is easily obtained in Islam, and that it consists of pronouncing the intention to divorce three times at one and the same time. This is a gross distortion of the facts. The reality – as described by the Qur'an – is as follows:

It is true that there should be three pronouncements. However, only one pronouncement can be given on the very first occasion. This is followed by a long period before a second pronouncement can be made, and a further delay before any third pronouncement can be made. The third pronouncement makes the divorce final. The very length of this procedure leads to reconciliation in most cases.

Before any pronouncement of divorce is made the husband should first have been patient with his wife. If he sees something in her of which he disapproves or simply dislikes, then he should try to balance her good qualities with her faults in his own mind.

> **(4:19)** [...]and consort with your wives in a goodly manner; if you dislike them, it may be that you dislike something which God might yet make a source of abundant good.

> **(4:34)** [...] As for those women whose animosity and or ill will you have reason to fear, then leave them alone in bed, and then separate; and if thereupon they pay you heed, do not seek a way against them (see 8.3).

If all these approaches fail, and the rift between the husband and wife deepens then resort should be made to

arbitration by appointing two persons (one from the wife's side and one from the husband's side) of good will and sound judgement.

> **(4: 35)** And if ye fear breach between them twain (the man and wife), appoint an arbiter from his folk and arbiter from her folk. If they desire amendment Allah will make them of one mind. Lo! Allah is ever Knower, Aware.

And if all these measures fail then the husband may resort to divorce, but he must follow the procedure laid down by the Qur'an.

> **(2:226, 227)** Those who take an oath that they will not approach their wives shall have four months of grace; and if they go back (on their oath) -- God is Much-Forgiving, a Dispenser of grace. But if they are resolved on divorce -- behold God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

> **(2:228)** And the divorced woman shall undergo, without remarrying, a waiting-period of three monthly courses: for it is not lawful for them to conceal what God has created in their wombs, if they believe in God and the Last Day. And during this period the husbands are fully entitled to take them back, if they desire reconciliation; but, in accordance with justice, the rights of the wives (with regard to their husbands) are equal to their (husbands') rights with regard to them, although men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And God is Almighty, Wise.

Note: the husband has relative advantage over his wife in the sense that the wife has to wait because of the possibility of pregnancy. Moreover, the husband has the primary responsibility of maintaining the family. In all other aspects husbands and wives have similar rights to one another, and this implies that the wife, too, has the right to divorce the husband. Otherwise 'equal' or 'similar rights' according to (2:228) has no meaning. Also, note the following verse:

> **(65:6,7)** (Hence) let the women (who are undergoing a waiting period) live in the same manner as you live yourselves, in accordance with your means; and do not harass them with a view to making their lives a misery. And if they happen to be with child, spend freely on them until they deliver their burden; and if they nurse your offspring (after the divorce has become final), give them their (due) recompense; and take counsel with one another in a fair manner (about the child's future). And if you both find it difficult (that the mother should nurse the child), let another woman nurse it on her behalf. (In all these respects) let him who has ample means spend according to his means; and let him whose means of subsistence are scant spend in accordance with what God has given him: God does not burden any human being with more than He has given him -- (and it may well be that) God will grant, after hardship, ease.

Other verses on divorce procedures are as follows:

(2:229) A divorce is only permissible twice: after that, the parties should either hold together on equitable terms, or separate with kindness. It is not lawful for you, to take back any of your gifts (from your wives), except when **both parties** fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. If ye do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, there is no blame on either of them if she gives something for her freedom. These are the limits ordained by Allah[...]

(65:2) And so, when they are about to reach the end of their waiting-period, either retain them in a fair manner or part with them in a fair manner. And let two persons of (known) probity from among your own community witness (what they have decided); and do yourselves bear true witness before God[...]

(2:230) And if he divorces her finally (the third time), she shall thereafter not be lawful unto him unless she takes another husband; then if the latter divorces her, there shall be no sin upon either of the two if they return to one another -- provided that **both** of them think that they will be able to keep within the bounds set by God.

As stated in the note above, the wife also has the right to seek divorce. She can initiate the divorce if she fears ill-treatment or desertion by her husband. However, before separation, if possible, the two should try to settle the differences amicably. Self-interest is the main hurdle to such a settlement.

> **(4:128)** And if a woman has reason to fear ill-treatment from her husband, or that he might turn away from her, it shall not be wrong for the two to set things peacefully to rights between themselves: for peace is best, and selfishness is ever-present in human souls. But if you do good and are conscious of Him -- behold, God is indeed aware of all that you do.

If amicable settlement is not possible, then as stated before in verse 4:35, they should resort to arbitration by appointing two persons (one from the wife's side and one from the husband's side) of good will and sound judgement. And if these fail then the only course left is to separate as the following verse states:

> **(4:130)** And if the husband and wife do separate, God will provide for each of them out of His abundance: for God is indeed Infinite, Wise.

Also in such cases, to keep the limits ordained by Allah a woman can, if necessary, free herself by sacrificing part of her dowry or marriage gifts (see verse 2:229 above).

8.6 Polygamy in Islam

The idea is widely put about that the Qur'an supports or condones polygamy. This view is not entirely wrong, but nor is it right in all circumstances. To find the true position we need to dig a little deeper than hearsay or a superficial reading.

The verses which are often used to support the idea of polygamy are:

> **(4:2,3)** Give unto orphans their wealth, exchange not the good for the bad (in your management thereof) nor absorb their wealth. Lo! That would be a great sin. And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hand possess. Thus it is more likely that ye will not do injustice.

From the last verse it must be emphasised that the Qur'anic position is that – unless one is able to treat his wives with just equality – one must not consider taking more than one wife. In practice, this condition is most difficult to fulfil and so it must be understood that the general recommendation is towards monogamy. Also, polygamy, as the verse suggests, can only be justified under particular circumstances. In any case, there is no escaping the fact that a man has ultimately to justify all his actions before Allah, remembering that Allah knows what is in his heart. The following verse emphasises the fact that it would be extremely difficult to deal justly between more than one wife. If one does put himself in that situation, it is only right to insist that one should not ignore the first wife, but fulfil all the outward duties that are obligatory on him in respect of her.

> **(4: 129)** Ye will not be able to deal equally between (your) wives, however much ye wish (to do so). But turn not altogether away (from one), leaving her in suspense. If ye do good and keep from evil, lo! Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

In seeking to understand more of reasons for the introduction of polygamy in Islam we might consider the following quotation from a paper submitted by Aisha Lemu at the International Islamic Conference held in London, from 3rd to 12th April, 1976. Mrs. Lemu, an Englishwoman, embraced Islam about fifteen years prior to this conference.

> One has only to recall the figures of the dead in the first and second world wars to be aware that literally millions of women and girls lost their husbands and fiancees and were left alone without any income or care or protection for themselves or their children. If it is still maintained that under these circumstances a man may marry only one wife, what options are left to the millions of other women who have no hope of getting a husband? Their choice bluntly stated, is between a chaste and childless old maidenhood, or becoming somebody's mistress, that is an unofficial second wife with no legal rights for herself or for her children. Most women would not welcome either of these since most women have always wanted and still do want the security of a legal husband and family.

The compromise, therefore, is for women under these circumstances to face the fact that if given the alternative many of them would rather share a husband than have none at all. And there is no doubt that it is easier to share a husband when it is an established and publicly recognised practice than when it is carried on secretly along with attempts to deceive the first wife.

> And it is no secret that polygamy of a sort is widely carried on in Europe and America. The difference is that while the Western man has no legal obligations to his second, third or fourth mistresses and their children, the Muslim husband has complete legal obligations towards his second, third or fourth wife and their children[8]

She says further: 'There may be other circumstances unrelated to war -- individual circumstances, where marriage to more than one wife may be preferable to other available alternatives -- for example where the first wife is chronically sick or disabled. There are, of course, some husbands who can manage this situation, but no one would deny its potential hazards. A second marriage in some cases could be a solution to all three parties'.

She goes on to conclude: 'I have mentioned some of these examples because to the majority of the Westerners polygamy is only thought in the context of a harem of glamorous young girls, not as a possible solution to some of the problems of Western society itself' [9]

According to the Qur'an, however, marital problems and discord need to be tackled by proper consultation and conciliation -- involving the spouses and their families. The Qur'an does not subscribe polygamy for any other reason than what is in verses 4:2-3.

8.7 The Veil (*Hijab*)

On the much-contested question of the *hijab* the important point to keep in mind is that the Qur'an enjoins modesty for both men and women.

> **(24:30, 31)** Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! Allah is aware of what they do. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display their adornment only that which is apparent[...]

For the woman in particular, it is implied that she should wear clothes in public which are primarily a modest dress but which does not act as an impediment to her activities. This is why drawing the veil on the bosom, is given as the limit, within which one must operate.

> **(24:31)** And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms, and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers or their brothers' sons or sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of the women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed.

In verse 33:59 below Allah is guiding the Prophet's female relatives and other believing women to use a cloak or outer garment when they go out – 'so that they may be recognised'. It should not really matter whether the head is covered or not as the Qur'an does not specify that the head should be covered.

> **(33:59)** O Prophet! Tell thy wives and thy daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks round them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognised and not annoyed. Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful.

In this connection I would like to quote a short article by Dr. Ibrahim B. Syed Phd. D.Sc. who is president of the Islamic Research Foundation, Louisville, Kentucky, USA.

> According to the Qur'an, the reason why Muslim women should wear an outer garment when going out of their homes is that they may be recognised as 'believing' women and differentiated from street-walkers for whom sexual harassment is an occupational hazard. The purpose of this verse was not to confine women to their homes, but to make it safe for them to go about their daily business without attracting unsavoury attention.
>
> Older women who are past the prospect of marriage are not required to wear 'the outer garment'. 'Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage, there is no blame on them if they lay aside their (outer) garments, provided they make not wanton display of their beauty: but it is best for them to be modest: and Allah is One Who sees and knows all things' (24:60).
>
> The Qur'an does not suggest that women should be veiled or they should be kept apart from the world of men. On the contrary, the Qur'an is

insistent on the full participation of women in society and in religious practices.

Morality of the self and cleanness of conscience are far better than the morality of the *purdah*. No goodness can come from pretence. Imposing the veil on women is the ultimate proof that men suspect their mothers, daughters, wives and sisters of being potential traitors to them. How can Muslim men meet non-Muslim women who are not veiled and treat them respectfully, but not accord the same respect to Muslim women?

To wear the *hijab* is certainly not an Islamic obligation on women. It is an innovation (*bid'ah*) of men suffering from a piety complex who are so weak spiritually that they cannot trust themselves!

Muslim women remained in mixed company with men until the late sixth century (A.H.) or 11th century (C.E.). They received guests, held meetings and went to wars to help their brothers and husbands, and they defended their castles and bastions.

It is part of the growing feeling on the part of Muslim men and women that they no longer wish to identify with the West, and that reaffirmation of their identity as Muslims requires the kind of *visible sign* that conservative clothing implies.

For these women the issue is not that they *have* to dress conservatively, but they *choose* to. In Iran Imam Khomeini first insisted that women must

> wear the veil and chador, but in response to large demonstrations by women, he modified his position and agreed that while the *chador* is not obligatory, MODEST dress is.[10]

Studying the Qur'an it is clear that the Qur'an does not try to give specific laws for all occasions but it gives fundamental principles which enable us to establish the basic guidance for our behaviour in all aspects of our life. It is a question of using common sense and reason on the basis of guiding principles (see section 13.5). In fact, Allah is less concerned with our rituals and far more with our behaviour and deeds, and yet we consider exactly the opposite to be the case.

8.8 *Jihad*

A great deal of misconception exists, particularly in the West, with regard to the meaning of the word *jihad* in Islam. In reality *jihad* is a duty upon all Muslims to commit themselves to a struggle on all fronts -- moral, spiritual and political -- to create a just and decent society. It is not - as is commonly understood - a 'holy war' against the non-believers. The phrase 'holy war' was coined by the West in its struggle against the Muslims in the time of the Crusades (a war instigated by the Church for 'religious' gain). There are other words in Arabic which are more appropriate to use in a war. And these words would surely have been applied had the idea of war been at the core of the concept described in the Qur'an by the word *jihad*. Examples of such words are *harb* (war) and *ma'araka* (battle). Below we quote *Haji* Ibrahim Golightly's response to a question on *jihad*.

> ***Jihad* means to strive or make an effort, usually in an Islamic context**, so that anything which requires an effort to be made is *jihad* and the person doing it is a *mujahid*. The media would have us believe that it is fighting and killing in the name of Allah. It is certainly in the name of Allah but, as usual, the media have corrupted the meaning so that they can apply its new meaning to 'fundamentalist Muslims', basically any Muslim who does not subscribe totally to the Western way of life. Making time in a busy schedule to study the Qur'an; going to a ***halal*** butcher rather than the closest or most convenient one; discussing Islam with both Muslims and non-Muslims and helping them to understand it better; studying *ayat* (signs), both of Qur'an and in nature and science, in order to increase *'ilm*, or knowledge; setting other Muslims a good example and showing non-Muslims the true way of Muslims; are all examples of *jihad* in daily life. *Jihad* is the effort made, not just against internal and external evils, but also to live at peace with oneself and one's community (Muslim and non-Muslim).

He concludes by saying: 'simply explaining the true meaning of *jihad* to those who do not know, is *jihad* in itself.'[11]

In fact, the implication of the word *jihad*, like all other words, can only be judged in the context of the Qur'anic verses in which it is used. The following are some typical verses, with appropriate comments, to indicate what the Qur'an conveys by *jihad*. The material below, including

most of the translations are based on Chapter 5 of Maulana Muhammad Ali's book *The Religion of Islam*.[12]

> **(22:78)** And strive hard (*jahidu*) for Allah with the endeavour which is right[...].

The *jihad* implies that one should exert oneself to one's utmost ability (i.e moral, spiritual or political) for the cause of Allah; to establish Allah's Deen, without resorting to war.

> **(29:6)** And whoever strives hard (*jahada*), he strives (*yujahidu*) only for his own soul, that is for his own benefit, for Allah is altogether Independent of (His) creatures.

> **(29:69)** And those who strive hard (*jahadu*) for Us, We will certainly guide them in Our ways, and Allah is surely with the doers of good.

The Arabic word *jahadu* is derived from *jihad*, and the addition of *fi-na* (for Us) indicates that *jihad*, in this case, is the spiritual striving to attain nearness to Allah, and the result of this *jihad* is stated to be Allah's guidance for those striving in His ways.

> **(25:52)** So do not follow the unbelievers, and strive hard (*jahid*) against them a mighty striving (*jihad-un*) with it.

The personal pronoun 'it' refers clearly to the Qur'an, as the context will show. It is a struggle (*jihad*) to win over the unbelievers, not with the sword but with the Qur'an.

> **(66:9)** O Prophet! Strive (*jahade*) against the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and be stern with them[...]

Here the Prophet is asked to carry on a *jihad* against both unbelievers and hypocrites. The hypocrites were those who were outwardly Muslims and lived among Muslims, and were treated like Muslims in all respects. They came to the mosque and prayed with the Muslims. A war against them was unthinkable and none was ever undertaken. They sometimes fought along with the Muslims against the unbelievers. Therefore, the injunction to carry on a *jihad* against both the unbelievers and hypocrites could not mean the waging of war against them. It was a *jihad* in the same sense in which the word is used in the above verses, a *jihad* carried on by means of the Holy Qur'an as expressly stated in 25:52, a striving hard to win them over to Islam. *Jihad* in both **25:52** and **66:9** is used in the moral and political sense. It does not imply war.

> **(2:218)** Lo! Those who believe, and those who emigrate (to escape the persecution) and strive hard (*jahadu*) in the way of Allah, these have hope of Allah's mercy. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

> **(8:74)** Those who believed and left their homes and strove hard (*jahadu*) for the cause of Allah, and those who took them in and helped them -- these are the believers in truth. For them is pardon, and a bountiful provision.

> **(3:142)** Or deemed ye that ye would enter Paradise while yet Allah knoweth not those of you who strive hard (*jahadu*), nor knoweth those (of you) who are steadfast?

In all these verses *jihad* is used in the general sense of striving hard, morally, spiritually, and in our day-to-day life. In all cases *jihad* implies a struggle in Allah's ways to achieve an objective, without resorting to war.

8.9 Intoxicating liquors

The drink prohibited in the Qur'an is described under the name *khamar* meaning any intoxicating thing that clouds or obscures the intellect. The Qur'anic verses reveal that prohibition of alcohol was not introduced overnight. In the first stage it was pointed out that its harm outweighed the benefits.

> **(2:219)** They ask thee about strong drink and games of chance. Say in both of them is great sin and some advantages for men, and their sin is greater than their advantage.

The next stage was when the Muslims were prohibited from coming to the mosque while drunk.

> **(4:43)** O ye who believe! Draw not near unto prayer when ye are drunken, till ye know that which ye utter[...]

Finally intoxicating liquors were prohibited as the handiwork of the devil.

> **(5:90)** O ye who believe! Strong drink and games of chance and idols and divining arrows are only an infamy of devil's handiwork. Leave it aside in order that ye may succeed.
>
> **(5:91)** The devil only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to turn you from rememberence of Allah and from (His) worship. Will you then refrain?

In this connection I would like to quote the following extract from a handout titled *The Islamic View on the Prohibition of Alcohol*, by S.M Bleher.

> Everybody would admit that there are problems with alcohol: drink driving, for example, or violent crimes in which alcohol plays a part. Yet most agree that the moderate consumption of alcohol as is customary in western society does not do much harm. Let's take a hard look at the facts:
>
> Alcohol is a bigger problem than we tend to admit, and it starts at an early age. According to government publications on the state of public health (1993) 20% of 9 to 15 year olds have had their first alcoholic drink by the age of 8, and 89% by the age of 15. 12% (more than one tenth!) of 11 to 15 year olds are regular drinkers. And according to 'social trends' (HMSO 1994), almost a third of the males living in Britain consume alcohol above sensible limits (consumption above sensible limits is lower in women with 11% of the total). Besides clear convictions for drunkenness

or drink driving, courts are kept busy with numerous offences committed under the influence of alcohol, from domestic violence (including child battering) to serious vandalism or grievous bodily harm. The Government's Health and Safety Executive jointly with the Health Department and Department of Employment had to publish policies on the 'problem drinker at work'; and the National Heath Service spends large amounts of scarce resources on illness caused or exacerbated by alcohol. Every Christmas there is a nation-wide campaign against drink driving. Government representatives lament the state of the nation's health and drinking habits, but don't do much more. There is a great deal of tax revenue in the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Islam takes a different view. It values the moral and spiritual health of a nation as much as its physical well being. It considers anything that interferes with the normal working of the mind, numbs our senses, thereby reducing our level of shame or responsibility, or clouds our perception as harmful (this includes alcohol as well as other drugs altering our mind). And, recognising that different people react quite differently to the same stimulant, it does not leave judgement, as to how much is acceptable, to them. Too many people thought they had control over their drinking habit, yet ended up having 'one glass too many'. Islam categorically states that if a substance can destroy the clarity of the mind in large quantities, it is harmful even in minute quantities. Islam, therefore, advocates a total prohibition of narcotic

drugs, including alcohol. It forbids the use, not just the abuse of these substances.[13]

8.10 Gambling

Gambling is prohibited as being a dishonest means of acquiring money at the cost of ordinary people who gamble without realising how heavily the odds are weighted against them.

In the three verses (2:219), (5:90,91) quoted above in section 8.9, we find that gambling or games of chance is grouped together with the intoxicant liquors. One reason for this must surely be because both are addictive. Alcohol destroys clarity of mind; gambling causes the mind to be preoccupied with future winnings (or recouping losses) - always hoping the next time will bring better luck! Most people think that a little 'flutter' is good for amusement. They do not realise that for the many who get addicted to it, it causes untold damages. Sadly, the Government promotes gambling because of the large amount of tax revenue. But the people who really win are the promoters who run big businesses.

If we take the National Lottery as an example, and examine its implications, we can see who the winners are, and what damage it is doing to society. The real winners are the people who run the National Lottery, their shareholders and the Government. The Government's justification is that part of the money is spent on 'good causes'. But the 'good causes' in most cases are projects which are used and enjoyed by the rich, such as the arts, the theatre, sports, national heritage, etc. On the other hand, if we analyse who the contributors are (i.e. those

who buy the lottery tickets) we find that they include a very high percentage of people who have difficulty in maintaining their families as it is. Yet they spend a significant amount of the family budget on the Lottery, hoping that the next time will bring them better luck and draw them out of the poor situation in which they find themselves. The pressure to escape the reality of their lives is massive, especially they have images of untold wealth paraded before them – just a lottery ticket away! The unfortunate dupes do not realise that there is actually a far greater probability of getting killed on the road than winning a million pounds on the National Lottery. Thus, in effect, the Government is extracting money from the poor and giving the benefits to the rich in the form of this 'voluntary tax'.

The full damage to society can only be worked out if a proper survey is done on what proportion of the family budget is spent on the Lottery by people living on the borderline – or close to it – and how it is affecting their families, both materially and mentally. The statistics should include all age ranges, as some of the newspaper reports suggest that children as young as 10 are playing scratch cards.

Note: Financial speculative activities, such as dealing in futures, options and derivatives, have a high degree of similarity with gambling. These, too, can cause a great deal of harm, upheaval and imbalance to the many while rewarding only a handful of people.

8.1.i Interest (*Riba*/Usury - see section 12.1)

8.1.ii Intercession (see section 10.3 selection no. 8)

8.1.iii The 'moon sighting' controversy[14]

In the Islamic calendar, traditionally, the first sighting of the new crescent moon by the unaided human eye marks the beginning of the month. In particular, such sightings are considered essential with regard to the start of Ramadan and the two Eid festivals. However, the unreliability of the dependence on physical visibility of the moon has led not only to wide variations in the three important dates within the same country, but also to a great disunity among the Muslim communities throughout the world. The problem can be easily solved if the traditional method is abandoned in favour of a purely scientific method. Before outlining the scientific method, I will examine what the Qur'an has to say on this matter. One can then decide whether the scientific approach is at odds with what is stated in the Qur'an.

Relevant Qur'anic guidance:

> **(6:96)** It is He who cleaveth the daybreak (from the dark). He made the night for rest and tranquillity, and **the sun and the moon for the reckoning (of time)** [...]
>
> **(10:5)** It is He who has made **the sun** the source of light **and the moon** a reflected light and measured out the stages for her **that you may know the number of years and the count (of time).** This is nothing but a part of His constructive design [...]

> **(55:5) The sun and the moon** follow courses **(exactly) computed**.
>
> **(9:36)** Lo! The number of months with Allah is **twelve months** by Allah's ordinance in the day that He created the heavens and the earth [...]
>
> **(2:189)** They ask thee concerning **the new moons**. Say: they are but signs **to mark fixed periods of time** in the affairs of men, and for pilgrimage [...]

Before discussing the implications of these verses I would like to outline the problems with the visual method, and the ways that a scientific method might overcome them.

Problems with the visual method:

For the moon to be visible to the naked eye the former must set after the sun has set. Some people use this condition to define the start of the lunar month, no matter how small the time interval between the two settings. Unfortunately, this method rests on one's position on the earth and is therefore prone to divergence on the degree of accuracy. It also opens the debate on how sunset and moonset should be defined and whether allowance should be made for atmospheric refraction (as is done, for example, in a formalised but not in actual way in the Astronomical Almanac). If the actual refraction is less or greater than that assumed in the formal computation of the Nautical Almanac Office, sunset may not occur precisely at the tabulated time.

There is another very important factor which has to be taken into account for the lunar crescent to be visible; i.e. the age of the moon from the instant the conjunction (defined below) starts. 'This age-criteria has been studied by various people by taking random observations and is usually stated in the form of general rules such as the sightings of the moon younger than 20 hours are rare and the sightings of the moon older than 24 hours are not uncommon, although its visibility may at times require it to be more than 30 hours old'.[15]

Thus the problem of the visual sighting of the crescent moon is caused by several factors depending on the interval between the conjunction and the next sunset; the actual position of the crescent moon with respect to the horizon; the clarity of the atmosphere and the visual acuity of the observer. For example, if the conjunction takes place in the very early hours of the morning it might be possible to sight the crescent moon on the same day, but if it is nearer the time of the sunset then the sighting, most likely, will be on the following day. There is no way of judging the point of demarcation which would indicate whether the crescent moon will be visible on the day of the conjunction or on the following day. The visual method, in this day and age, is totally incongruous and needs to be replaced by something which does not violate the principles outlined by the Qur'an. Let us examine this further:

The scientific or the astronomical method:

The scientific method is based on the physical conditions when the earth, the moon, and the sun, are in the same vertical plane but not necessarily in the same line, and the

moon is between the earth and the sun. This condition is known as the '**conjunction**'. In scientific or astronomical terms, the 'conjunction' is defined as the condition when the sun and the moon has the same 'right ascension'.[16] In effect, this condition is the mark of the start of the lunar month. What is more the moment of its occurrence can be calculated precisely, being independent of any terrestrial locations. In fact, it is so accurate that it is possible to use the conjunction to calculate the lunar calendar for hundreds of years ahead.

The implications of the scientific method:

First of all, one must accept the fact that the required condition of identifying a lunar month will be met, so long as the scientific method guarantees the presence of the crescent moon, irrespective of whether the crescent moon is visible to the naked eye or not. At conjunction, the moon is not completely shadowed as viewed from the earth. However, the degree of illumination is so low that for us it is completely invisible. The apparent eastward motion of the moon then produces changes, in the shape of an illuminated disk, as a result of the changing geometry of the moon with respect to the sun and the earth. These are called the 'phases of the moon' and the Islamic New Moon is the instant of the start of the crescent phase. Thus, just after conjunction, although the crescent moon is not visible to the naked eye, there is no doubt that it is present in the sky. Hence, scientifically speaking, we can regard the crescent moon as physically present and the only thing we need to know is the exact time when it appears.

Fortunately, though the time interval between the conjunction and the crescent phase of the moon is very small it can be calculated accurately. The maximum time taken by the moon to move away from the sun is 19 minutes and therefore, 19 minutes after the moment of conjunction, the moon begins to reflect light towards the earth. In other words, scientifically, the crescent phase of the moon starts 19 minutes after the moment of conjunction, although the light may not become visible until 20 to 30 hours after conjunction. In the UK, the conjunction times for a number of years can be obtained from the Royal Astronomical Observatory. If we assume that the day changes at 12 p.m., then the conjunction can take place any time between 00.00 a.m. to 12 p.m. on any particular day. This means that the crescent moon can then appear any time between 00.19 a.m. of that day to 00.19 a.m. of the following day. Thus, 19 minutes after the moment of conjunction the Islamic New Moon appears. **Therefore, Ramadan or any other important event can take place on the following day i.e. the day after conjunction.** Such a method would allow for the easy publication of the dates well in advance so that people would not be unduly inconvenienced. After all, Allah desires for us ease, not hardship (2:185). Outside the UK one need only convert the same conjunction time to the appropriate local times, by adding or subtracting the time difference applicable, as is done for any other international activities. Although the conjunction is independent of any terrestrial location, the international time variations will still apply, simply because of the time gaps that exist between countries.

Finally, if -- as some people suggest -- it is not acceptable to use 12 p.m. for the change of a day, then one need only

establish an agreed reference time other than 12 p.m., so long as it be internationally for all other activities. However, the principle remains the same, i.e. **to use the conjunction as the start of a lunar month**. The Qur'anic guidance advocates the use of both the sun and the moon for the reckoning of time. The use of the exact instant of conjunction is doing just that, as the conjunction starts at the instant when the sun and the moon have the same right ascension. The second condition that the new moon is to mark fixed periods of time is also met as the crescent phase starts 19 minutes after the conjunction.

The Qur'an, nowhere says that the moon has to be observed with the naked eye, rather it tends toward the scientific or the astronomical method. There are numerous verses in the Qur'an encouraging us to think, to ponder, to explore and to gain knowledge, and the moon-sighting should not be the exception.

> **(45:13)** And He has made subservient to you, from Himself, all that is in the heavens and on earth: in this behold, there are messages indeed for people who think!
>
> **(3:190)** Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and (in) the difference of night and day are signs for men of understanding.
>
> **(10:5)** [...]Allah created not this but with truth. He makes the signs manifest for people who have knowledge.

References:

1. *The True Translation of the Glorious Qur'an*, by Late Ali Ahmad Khan Jullundri. Published by World Islamic Mission, 18-K Gulberg 2, Lahore, Pakistan. Refer to notes on verse 5:38.
2. Ibid., verse 5:38.
3. (i) *Arabic English Lexicon*, (8 parts), by Edward William Lane. Published by Islamic book centre, 25-B, Masson Road, P.O. Box 1625. Lahore-3, Pakistan.
3. (ii) *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Edited by J. M. Cowan. Published by Spoken Language Services, Inc. P.O. Box 783. Ithaca, New York.
4. *Does the Qur'an Sanction the Hitting of Women?* by Rachael Tibbet. p.1.
5. Letter to *Al-Balaagh*, Nov/Dec 1996 issue. P.O. Box 1925, Lensia1820, South Africa by Dr. Sayed Abdul Wadud. (Lahore, Pakistan).
6. Letter to *Al-Balaagh*, Nov/Dec 1996 issue. P.O. Box 1925, Lensia 1820, South Africa by Basheer Ahmed Vania. (Lensia, South Africa).
7. Most of the Qur'anic verses are taken from: *The Message of the Qur'an*, by Muhammad Asad. Published by Dar Al-Andalus, Gibralter.
8. *Women in Islam*, by B. Aisha Lemu and Fatima Heeren. Published by The Islamic foundation, 223 London Road, Leicester LE2 1ZE. p.28.
9. Ibid., p. 28, 29.
10. *Is Hijab Compulsory*? Article by Professor Dr. Ibrahim B. Syed Phd. D.Sc. Published in Al-Balaagh, Vol. 22, No.1, Feb/March 1997. P.O. Box 1925, Lensia, South Africa.
11. *Jihad*, Haji Ibrahim Golightly: A question - answer printed in the Message, the UIA magazine of July - September issue, 1995.
12. *The Religion of Islam*, by Maulana Muhammad Ali M.A., LL.B. Published by National Publication and Printing House U.A.R. Based on chapter 5, pp. 545-595.
13. A pamphlet entitled *The Islamic View on the Prohibition of Alcohol*,
by S.M. Bleher. Published by UK Islamic Mission Dawah Centre, 401-403 Alum Rock Road. Birmingham B8 3DT.
14. *The Islamic Tradition of "Moon Sighting" and its Implications*, by M. A. Malek.

15. *A Modern Guide to Astronomical Calculations of Islamic Calendar, Times & Qibla*, by Dr. Mohammed Ilyas.
Berita Publishing Sdn, Bhd. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
16. Ibid. p. 10.

9. LATTER-DAY SAINTS (PIRS)[1]

A large number of men in the Muslim world have captured the hearts and minds of ordinary people to such a degree that they have come to be regarded as saints (*pirs*). The saints can be divided into two categories:

(i) People who have studied and understood the Islamic faith in the Qur'anic sense, and have worked for the service of humanity; who have attained greatness on their own merit, never desiring that their graves become shrines for misguided people to pray at, with the vain intention of obtaining requests.

(ii) People who -- in order to become rich and powerful -- have claimed the status of saints. These people use paid hirelings to propagate stories of their 'miraculous' powers; a ploy to which most human weaknesses fall prey. These are the sharks of the Islamic world and almost invariably the ruling politicians will have close connections with these people. The standard practice of these people is to put it about that they have the capacity to plead with Allah on our behalf in order to get us a place in Heaven. Thus, to assure one's place in Heaven, one must become their disciple by paying them appropriate homage and fees. They hold annual gatherings in order to increase their membership. Through these gatherings they advertise their 'miraculous'

> powers by using paid people who are ready to swear to the genuineness of these powers. As their graves become shrines, these 'saints' also continue to exert influence even after their death. People go to their graves to ask for favours which no one can grant but Allah. The unscrupulous people who control these shrines invariably use the shrines as a source of income.

Unfortunately, the graves of the genuine saints are also used by people who control them in order to make money. These controllers hold annual gatherings and collect subscriptions in the name of maintaining the graves. They also impress upon people that donating money for their maintenance makes the saint plead on their behalf to Allah for a place in Heaven. A shining example of this is the shrine in Ajmeer, India, where people go in their thousands, praying and crying for days to gain favours from the dead saint. As far as a Muslim is concerned there is no harm in visiting the graves of anyone, but only to pay one's respects and pray for the dead person's salvation on the Day of Resurrection. People must understand that even the saints have no power to plead on anyone else's behalf to Allah. Also, once dead, they will remain dead until the Day of Resurrection and, in fact, on the Day of Resurrection they will disown any association with any disciple. The following verses I hope, will illustrate my points.

> **(35:22)** Nor are the living equal with dead. Lo! Allah maketh whom He will to hear. Thou canst not reach those who are in the graves.

(30:52) For, verily, thou canst not make the dead to hear, nor canst thou make the deaf to hear the call[...].

(46:5) And who is further astray than those who, instead of Allah, pray unto such as hear not their prayer until the Day of Resurrection, and are unconscious of their prayer.

(35:14) If ye pray unto them they hear not your prayer, and if they heard they could not grant it to you. On the Day of Resurrection they will disown association with you. None can inform you like Him Who is Aware.

(10:105) And (O Muhammad) set thy purpose resolutely for religion, as a man by nature upright, and be not of those who ascribe partners to (Allah).

(10:106) And cry not beside Allah, unto that which cannot profit thee nor hurt thee, for if thou didst so then wert thou of the wrong-doers.

(10:107) If Allah afflicteth thee with some hurt there is none who can remove it save Him; and if He desireth good for thee, there is none who can repel His bounty. He striketh with it whom He will of his bondsmen. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

(22:73) O Mankind! A similitude is coined, so pay ye heed to it: Lo! Those on whom ye call beside Allah will never create a fly though they combine

> together for the purpose. And if the fly took something from them, they could not rescue it from him. So weak are (both) the seeker and the sought!
>
> **(29:41)** The likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she taketh unto herself a house, and lo! The frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.

There are many more similar verses which make it clear that no one but Allah has the power to grant our prayers. One must remember that in Islam there is no intermediary between man and Allah. Note the force of the following verse:

> **(2:186)** When my servants ask you concerning Me, tell them that I am always near. I hear the prayer of the suppliant whenever he calls out to Me. Therefore, let them hear My call and put their trust in Me, that they may be rightly guided.

It is unforgivable that, in spite of repeatedly committing ourselves to Allah every day (i.e. by reciting in Sura *Fatiha*: 'Thee (alone) we obey; Thee (alone) we ask for help' **(1:4)**), we turn aside to seek others' help to plead on our behalf. How, then can we seriously claim to be 'rightly guided'?

References:

1. *A Restoration of Faith*, by M. A. Malek. pp. 27, 28.

10. THE IMPLICATIONS OF HADITH FOR ISLAM

10.1 The meaning of Hadith and *Sunnah*

According to the Qur'an, *hadith* means 'story', 'news', 'report' or 'narration' and it is used in the Qur'an a number of times in these senses. In practice, the word *hadith*, to most people calling themselves Muslim, means the reported sayings and practices of the Prophet. The operative word here is 'reported'. The Hadith literature was collected by word of mouth, about 250 years after the death of the Prophet. The Hadiths – as the Hadith literature is commonly called – can be classified roughly in four categories:

1. What the Prophet said.
2. What the Prophet did.
3. What the Prophet silently approved of, in others.
4. Hadiths which give descriptions of what the Prophet was like.

On the question of *sunnah*:

Sunnah according to the Hadith means the laws that have been derived from the Hadith literature based on the reported teachings and practices of the Prophet. In total contrast, according to the Qur'an *Sunnah* means the 'The Law and Practice of Allah which is immutable or unchangeable.' **(48:23)** "*Wa lun tajida li sunnat illah tabdila*". A few other verses in which the word *Sunnah* appears are given below.

> **(33:62)** [...]never will you find any change in Allah's way *[sunnah]*!
>
> **35:43)** [...]no change will you ever find in Allah's way *[sunnah]*; yes no deviation will you ever find in Allah's way *[sunnah]*!

This contradiction between the Qur'an and the Hadith regarding the question of *sunnah* can be resolved easily if we understand the position of the Prophet vis-à-vis the Qur'an.

The Qur'an is 'the Word of Allah' which was uttered by the Prophet as it was conveyed by him to the world under the inspiration of the Revelation. Thus, in effect, the Qur'an is the 'utterance' or 'the sayings of the Prophet' in a way which nothing else can claim to be. Given this, any attempt to distinguish between the two (i.e. between the word of Allah and the sayings of the Prophet) is impossible. It is impossible, since the Qur'an is, by common consent, both. It, the Qur'an, is the point where they (the Word of Allah and the utterance of the Prophet) beyond doubt, converge. From this understanding, and on this basis, we are equipped to receive the only logically sustainable explanation of the call in the Qur'an 'to follow the Prophet'. That is, we are being asked to follow that which the Prophet is giving us, i.e. the Qur'an and the teachings it conveys. We must understand that 'to follow the Prophet', as stated in the Qur'an is an imperative to follow what was inspired in him through revelation. This exhortation has no connection whatever with the sayings and practices (the Hadiths) which were attributed to Muhammad by people some 250 years later, and primarily collected by word of mouth.

The Hadiths frequently contradict the Qur'an, and that in itself is proof enough that they have nothing to do with the Prophet. In addition – and to the surprise of many Muslims who use the term frequently and unthinkingly – the only *sunnah* that is mentioned in the Qur'an is Allah's *sunnah,* and we are told that it *never* changes. Allah's *sunnah* – or way – is fixed and encompasses His Laws and Practices which apply to all His creation. Such is Allah's *sunnah*.

10.2 Historical background of Hadiths[1]

To understand the background to the development of Hadith literature one must sift through the history of Islam from about 250 years after the time of our Prophet for it is towards the end of this period that the Hadith literature was produced. The problem is that there are many conflicting historical accounts about what was happening at that time. The picture one gets is more of Muslim political history than the real history of Islam. From the sheer mass of contradictory stories one must assume that the real history of Islam for that period is lost. The thing one may say for certain however is that during the time of the Prophet and his companions the policy was not to write down *hadiths* (i.e. hearsay accounts of what the Prophet said and did). The Qur'an was written down during the lifetime of the Prophet but 'the Hadith' was never written down and any attempt to do so was addressed by those who knew the Prophet, fought alongside him, and upheld his honour. There are two reasons for this. The first is that such human scribblings would have found their way into and thus corrupted the Qur'anic scriptures. The second is that people would have concentrated on 'the Hadith' – i.e. what the Prophet

said – and therefore ignored the Qur'an. Hence, the Prophet and his companions who ruled for about thirty years after him, made sure that nothing was written down as far as the Prophet's sayings and practices were concerned. The surprising thing is that even after the companions (i.e. after Hazrat Ali's period, which was about 41 *Hijra*) hadiths as such were not written down. In fact, during the first century of the Prophet's era no *hadiths* were written down whatsoever. Stories circulated by word of mouth but they were never written down because the view was well known that the Prophet and the companions did not want anything of the kind to be done, and so there was a very strong feeling against the writing of any sort of 'Hadith' literature.

Looking at the written *hadiths*, the first well-known collection that appeared was by Malik Ibn Anas (d. 179 A.H.). This was during the first part of the second century of the Prophet's era. He collected *hadiths* mainly for legal purposes as he was only interested in the application of Hadith in law. His work is known as the Muwatta. He makes references to two small collections but these were more or less at the beginning of the second century and there is no trace of them except for his reference.

The next important collection is by Hanbal in the third century. There is a gap between his writings and those of Malik's, during which there was a tremendous number of *hadiths* in circulation, not in writing, only by word of mouth, among which there had accrued many clearly false ones. So the question arose: how to distinguish the good *hadiths* from the bad? Ahmed bin Hanbal resolved this to his own satisfaction by apparently tracing each *hadith* right up to the source (i.e. right up to the period when the

Prophet was alive) and each *hadith* accordingly was called a *Masnad* (i.e. a Tradition which is traceable). His writings are known as the *Masnad* of Ahmad bin Hanbal. He collected about 30,000 *hadiths* but they are not arranged in any proper order.

The next important collection was in the third century, by Bukhari, who died in 257 A.H. He collected 7275 *hadiths* out of some 600,000 which he is supposed to have gathered. His collection is also known as *Sahih* Hadith i.e. Correct Hadith. He was the first to arrange *hadiths* in chapters, and the chapters were divided according to the subject matter. His work contains material on historical, ethical, theological, legal and various other aspects. A contemporary of Bukhari was Muslim who died in 261 A.H. He collected 4348 *hadiths* out of some 300,000. His *hadiths* are not arranged in the same way as Bukhari's. His intention was to purify the *hadiths* that were available, in other words he put stress more on the purity rather than collecting a large quantity of *hadiths*. His collections are also known as *Sahih* Hadith. It must be stressed that many Muslims regard these two Hadiths (Bukhari and Muslim) so highly that in a case of contradiction with the Qur'an the Hadith overrides the Qur'an in their judgement. There are four other collections which were written more-or-less towards the end of the third century *Hijra* and these are by Abu Daud (d. 275), Ibn Maja (d. 303), Al-Tirmidi (d. 279), and Al-Nasai (d. 303). They deal almost entirely with legal traditions (i.e. with what is permitted and what is forbidden); and so do not give information on religious or theological subjects. These six collections together are known as *Sahih Satta* or the six correct hadiths, of which

Bukhari and Muslim are regarded as most important, the other four occupying second place.

The Hadith collection went through a **selection procedure** in which the following conditions were used for the acceptance of a *hadith*.

1. Continuity of the chain (*Isnad*) of transmitters. The chain of transmitters had to be unbroken in order for a *hadith* to be acceptable.

2. The integrity of the transmitters. The integrity of transmitters was established in terms of their outward observance of Islam.

3. Soundness of memory of the transmitters. It had to be verified through the biographical sciences of Hadith that each transmitter had a sound memory.

4. Conformity of the *hadith* with other *hadith*. It was important that the hadith conform with similar *hadiths* on the same topic.

5. The absence of defects in the *hadith*. A defect is defined as a hidden defect in the *hadith* which can only be detected after thorough investigation.

Considering the five points in turn one can see a glaring omission i.e. there is no mention of the rejection of a *hadith* on the basis of its contradiction with the Qur'an. Effectively, it means that the Hadith can override the Qur'an, or in other words the Hadith is more important than the Qur'an.

Let me now examine the above five criteria. In the first case, Bukhari is supposed to have travelled widely to establish the names of the various persons in the chain, right up to the Prophet's time. If a *hadith* was to be good then the chain of transmitters had to be unbroken and one had to be able to find all the links. But how did the links come about when no *hadiths* were committed to writing during the first century!

A lot of research has been done on the Hadiths, especially by Western historians (orientalists) in an attempt to recover history from the Hadiths. They almost unanimously find that one can recover some history of the second and the third century but almost nothing of the first. The logical conclusion given these findings is that the 'links' which spread over the eight generations succeeding the death of Muhammad were concocted. Therefore, the so-called 'science of *isnad*' – the touchstone of a *hadith's* authenticity – has the tremendous flaws in it.

How, then, can we go on giving credence to something that was not written down and yet which, some 250 years after the fact, Bukhari supposedly managed to trace back to its source (i.e. the Prophet) by establishing all the links in a chain which cannot possibly have been genuinely reconstructed!

The second and the third criteria to which Bukhari decided to subject his work sought to establish that the transmitters were honest persons in terms of their outward observance of Islam, and that each had a sound memory. This he did by apparently collecting the biography of each of the transmitters. How he managed to

do this without written records, bridging a gap of about eight generations, and simultaneously establishing not only biographical data but also a compelling analysis of the mental faculties of his subjects defies belief! An example is called for: in a large number of *hadiths* Abu Huraira is taken as the last link in the chain of narration. He was not – even according to Bukhari's extraordinary method of compilation – assigned a good memory, however. But even this unnecessary inconvenience was not a problem for Bukhari who found an explanation:

> Bukhari (4:841)
>
> Narated Abu Huraira: I said, "O Allah's Apostle! I hear many narrations from you but I forget them." He said, "Spread your covering sheet." I spread my sheet and he moved both his hands as if scooping something and emptied it in the sheet and said, "Wrap it." I wrapped it round my body, and since then I have never forgotten a single hadith.

Most ingenious, I'm sure you will agree!

The fourth criterion is overall agreement within Hadith as a whole. It means that any one *hadith* should comply with similar *hadiths* which give the same sort of story and that this should be seen as a basis for accepting it as authentic. In modern parlance, it means that the various stories should 'hang together', that one account should not conflict with another, and if there is no conflict, we should assume that the story is, therefore, true. The intelligent and attentive reader who takes the time to read a moderate number of even so-called *sahih hadith* on any

subject will not need to go far before he finds a distinct failing on even this count.

The Islamic clergy expends great energy trying to account for these inconsistencies and contradictions. Their answers to your common-sense observations may involve various choices of words, yet the thrust can broadly be summarised thus: in order to understand the Hadith you have to be very learned. There seem to be contradictions in the Hadith to you because you are not learned. They – the clergy – are learned. Therefore, they do not see contradictions. When you are learned like them you, too, will not see contradictions. Until you are as learned as they you cannot contend with them on this (or any) subject. The fact that you fail to perceive any of this only testifies to your own ignorance.

It should be noted that we have been discussing the *sahih*, or so-called authentic Hadith. There are other grades of *hadith* which are viewed with varying degrees of suspicion even by those who accept the '*sahih*'. We do not trouble ourselves with them here for obvious reasons.

It is interesting to note that practically no Hadiths were written down during the reign of the Ummayads. Their rule lasted from 41 A.H. to 132 A.H. and they had embraced Islam after the Prophet conquered Mecca. The Abbasids who are descended from the Prophet's uncle came to power after the Ummayads. Their rule lasted up to 656 A.H. and it was under their regime that the Hadiths were written and the various schools of law established. It was the Abbasids who encouraged the writing of Hadiths – especially those which were favourable to their plans and rule.

10.3. Ways the Hadith contradicts the Qur'an[2]

One can quote several hundred *hadiths* which not only contradict the Qur'an but also clearly do damage to the Prophet's good name. From Bukhari there is a selection below of some typical *hadiths* on various topics in order to give an overall impression of what we mean. The Qur'anic verses are given alongside so that the reader can judge for himself whether or not the Hadiths contradict the Qur'anic verses as is claimed here.

The first item selected is on stoning for adultery or fornication. The Qura'nic law on this is absolutely clear. The Qur'an makes no distinction between adultery and fornication. The Arabic word for adultery or fornication is *zina*. Adultery, according to the English dictionary, is sex outside marriage, whereas fornication is when the persons concerned are not married. English law, thus, makes a distinction between the two. Qur'anic law does not. The Qur'an actually makes this law very clear. The punishment for proven cases is 100 lashes. Also, in the case of married people, four witnesses are required before the case can be adjudged proven. This clause is often misused, because the fact remains that it would be almost impossible to find four witnesses unless, for example, someone in power, for personal reasons, bribed people to stand as witnesses. Finally, in order not to punish the innocent, the Qur'anic law gives the opportunity to the man or the woman to deny the crime in the name of Allah. That is, they have to take an oath in the name of Allah that they are not guilty. In such a case, the court must leave the punishment to Allah. Our human courts cannot punish them. The Qur'an is very clear on this. And yet we find the so-called Islamic states stoning people to death

on the strength of a ruling drawn from what the Hadith has to say, and not judging cases according to the Qur'anic law. They bury the woman up to the neck and then kill her by stoning her on her head. The man is buried up to the waist and then stoned. It is a barbarous practice and the West gives it a lot of publicity to denigrate Islam. Sadly, Bukhari has a large number of *hadiths* to support this act and the ruling shows the Prophet in a very bad light. Unfortunately, most of us do not know what the Qur'an has to say on this matter. Here is a straightforward case where the Qur'anic law is absolutely clear. And yet we ignore the Qur'an completely and accept the Hadith unquestioningly.

Why are we not, then, following the Qur'an? In fact, when one reads these *hadiths*, one gets the feeling that there must have been some kind of concerted plan at work. Dr. Abdul Wadud, in his book *Conspiracies against the Qur'an*, explores this question. He gives the following explanation: the Arabs defeated the Persians completely in war but the Persians were far more advanced in knowledge and writing than the Arabs. Therefore, they used their superiority in writing to corrupt Islam from the inside. Obviously, true Islam cannot be corrupted because the Qur'an is there, and as long as we follow the Qur'an there is no problem. But how to make people deviate from the Qur'an? The answer: by creating another, additional body of writing, which ascribes un-Qur'anic acts to the Prophet, and then persuading people that following this body of writing amounts to a Muslim life.

We find this approach has been most effective. In fact, we see that once the name of the Prophet is invoked we just

accept as the truth whatever is said and follow it blindly. So where is our support for the claim of conspiracy? The circumstantial evidence – either not known or simply ignored by the mass of Muslims – is compelling. If we take the writers of the six main collections of *hadith*: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Ibn Maja, Al-Tirmidi, and Al-Nasai they all have one vital feature in common. They were all born within the Persian Empire.

In addition to these, we should mention the well-known historian Tabari who died in 311A.H., a period very close to when the Hadith were written. Tabari wrote 30 volumes of *tafsir* (commentary) on the Qur'an, based on the Hadith. Later on, he wrote a history of Islam in 13 volumes based on his *tafsir* derived from the same Hadith. Therefore, his *tafsir* rests on *hadith*, as does his history. The Qur'an, too, is drawn through the prism of the *hadiths*. Thus, all his books derive their credentials from the Qur'an, but they are not based on the Qur'an. They are based on the Hadith – a spurious, later body of work. Today, no-one dares challenge Tabari in any of his views, since that would amount to challenging the Hadith which, in the minds of the simple Muslims, have been accepted as factual accounts of the Prophet's utterances. Tabari's work has become one of the main reference works used by Muslims who use it without ever questioning its authenticity.

Below are listed some important issues, with the relevant Qur'anic verses, to show how the Hadiths clearly contradict the Qur'an.

Selection no. 1: punishment for adultery

The punishment of stoning to death for adultery has its origin in the Old Testament. This law has been copied by all the six collectors of *hadith* who stress their claims that the Prophet practiced it. To counter this argument, we will first look at what the Qur'an has to say, followed by its contradiction in Bukhari.

The Quranic verses:

> **(24: 2)** The adulterer and the adulteress, scourge ye each of them (with) a hundred stripes. And let not pity for the twain withhold you from obedience to Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of believers witness their punishment.
>
> **(24:5-9)** Those who accuse honourable women but bring not four witnesses, scourge them with eighty stripes and never (afterward) accept their testimony – they indeed are evil-doers. Save those who afterward repent and make amends (For such) lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. As for those who accuse their wives but have no witnesses except themselves: let the testimony of one of them be four testimonies, (swearing) by Allah that he is of those who speak the truth; And a fifth, invoking the curse of Allah on him if he is of those who lie. And it shall avert punishment from her if she bear witness before Allah four times that the thing he saith is indeed false. And a fifth time that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaketh the truth.

Bukhari (ref: 8.816) Narrated Ibn Abbas:

> Umar said, "I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, 'We do not find the verse of *rajam* (stoning to death) in the Holy Book,' and consequently they may go astray by leaving an obligation that Allah has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of *rajam* be inflicted on him who commits illegal intercourse if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession." Sufyan added, "I have memorised this narration in this way". Umar added "Surely Allah's messenger carried out the penalty of *Rajam*, and so did we after him."

Bukhari (Ref: 3.885) Narrated Abu Huraira and Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani:

> A Bedouin came to Allah's messenger and said, "O Allah's Messenger! I ask you by Allah to judge my case according to Allah's Laws". His opponent, who was more learned than he, said, "Yes, judge between us according to Allah's Laws, and allow me to speak." Allah's Messenger said, "Speak." He said, "My son was working as a labourer for this man and he committed illegal sexual intercourse with his wife. The people told me that it was obligatory that my son should be stoned to death, so in lieu of that I ransomed my son by paying one hundred sheep and a slave-girl. Then I asked the religious scholars about it. They informed me that my son must be lashed one hundred times, and be exiled for one year, and the wife of this (man) must be stoned to death." Allah's Messenger said, "By Him in whose hands my soul is, I shall judge between you according to

> Allah's Laws. The slave-girl and the sheep are to be returned to you, your son is to receive a hundred lashes and be exiled for one year. You, Unais go to the wife of this man and if she confesses her guilt, stone her to death." Unais went to the woman next morning and she confessed. Allah's Messenger ordered that she be stoned to death.

Both of these *hadiths* disregard the Qur'anic verses altogether. The verses I quoted from the Qur'an show how in the eyes of true Islamic Law the treatment given to women is absolutely equal to that for men. The Qur'anic judgement also makes it possible for the innocent to escape punishment despite the contrary testimony of others.

Selection no. 2

The following *hadiths* are some of the examples of the extremely adverse comments supposedly made by the Prophet against women. They totally contradict his character, as well as the spirit of the Qur'an.

Bukhari (ref: 1.301) narrated AbuSa 'id Al-Kudri:

> Once, Allah's Messenger went out of the Musalla (to offer prayer) of *Id-al-Adha*. Then he passed by the women and said, "O women! Give alms, as I have seen that the majority of the dwellers of Hell-fire were you (women)." They asked, "Why is it so, O Allah's Messenger?" He replied, "You curse frequently and are ungrateful to your husbands. I have not seen anyone more deficient in intelligence

> and religion than you." The women asked, "O Allah's Messenger! What is deficient in our intelligence and religion?" He said, "Is not the evidence of two women equal to the witness of one man?" They replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her intelligence. Isn't it true that a woman can neither pray nor fast during the menses?" The women replied in the affirmative. He said, "This is the deficiency in her religion."

Bukhari (7.030) narrated Abdullah bin Umar:

> Allah's Apostle said, "Evil omen is in the woman, the house and the horse."

One can quote many verses from the Qur'an to refute the above statements. Examples are: 2:223; 4:19; 16:97; 33:35 and 48:5,6. **The Qur'an does not denigrate women in any way, but the Hadith literature contains woman-degrading *hadiths*** which portray the woman as naturally crooked and beyond reform, more evil than man, of lower intelligence, and a hindrance to prayers – grouped together with dogs and asses – (ref: Bukhari 1.490, Muslim 1032, 1034, Abu Daud 703).

Selection no. 3

To approach women during their menses, for sexual purposes, is forbidden in the Qur'an. It is impossible to imagine that the Prophet was unaware of this injunction in the Qur'an and yet Bukhari, it appears, has been able to unearth the most intimate private affairs of the Prophet.

He claims the authority of Hazrat Aisha in order to make it look authentic.

Bukhari (ref: 1.298); narrated Aisha:

> The Prophet and I used to take a bath from a single pot while we were *junub* [the unclean state after sexual intercourse]. During the menses, he used to order me to put on an *izar* (dress worn below the waist) and used to fondle me. While in *itikaf* (see note below) he used to bring his head near me and I would wash it while I used to be in periods (menses).
> Note: *itikaf* is seclusion in a mosque for the purpose of worshipping Allah.

Bukhari (Ref: 1.299) Narrated Abdur Rahman bin Al-Aswad:

Aisha said: "Whenever Allah's Messenger wanted to fondle anyone during her periods (menses), he used to order her to put on an *izar* and start fondling her." Aisha added "None of you could control his sexual desires as the Prophet."

Contrast this with specific Qur'anic injunction:

> **(2:222)** They question thee (O Muhammad) concerning menstruation. Say: It is a vulnerable condition, so let women alone at such times and go not unto them till they are cleansed. And when they have purified themselves, then go unto them as Allah hath enjoined upon you.

Selection No. 4

Here are a few typical examples of *hadiths* which show aspects of character ascribed to the Prophet that are totally irrational. These also strengthen the above-mentioned conspiracy theory, as all the irrefutable historical evidence on the Prophet's nature contradict the spirit of such narrations.

Bukhari (ref: 7.590), narrated Anas:

> The climate of Medina did not suit some people, so the Prophet ordered them to proceed along with his shepherd, i.e. his camels, and drink their milk and urine (as medicine). So they proceeded along with the shepherd i.e. the camels, and drank their milk and urine till their bodies became healthy. Then they killed the shepherd and drove away the camels. When the news reached the Prophet (pbuh) he sent some people in their pursuit. When they were brought, he cut their hands and feet and their eyes were branded with heated pieces of iron.

Bukhari (ref: 7.252/253/254) narrated Um Salama and Um Atiyya:

A woman was bereaved of her husband and her relatives worried about her eyes (which were diseased). They came to Allah's Messenger and asked him to allow them to treat her eyes with *kohl* (antimony eye powder), but he said, "[...]nay, she cannot use *kohl* till four months and ten days have elapsed."

Bukhari (Ref: 9.130) Narrated Anas bin Malik:

> Allah's Messenger used to visit Um Haram bint Milhan and she was the wife of Ubada bin As-Samit. One day the Prophet visited her and she provided him with food and started looking for lice in his head. Then Allah's Messenger slept and afterwards woke up smiling[...]

It is difficult to imagine anyone capable of such rank treachery and stupidity that depicted in the first two *hadiths* – let alone ascribe such a cruel nature to our Prophet! It is difficult, also, to imagine a situation where someone else's wife would be looking for lice on the Prophet's head on one if his supposed regular trips to see her, particularly as the Qur'an enjoins believing men and women to lower their gaze and be modest, an injunction which would seem to preclude such a suggestive intimacy.

Selection no. 5

One of the commonest beliefs is that *Hadith* (particularly Vol. 6 of Bukhari – which give various information on when and under what circumstances parts of the Qur'an were supposed to have been revealed) is essential in order to understand the Qur'an. This is misleading on many grounds.

Firstly, the number of verses covered by Bukhari are insignificant compared to the total number of Qur'anic verses. Therefore, if this assertion were correct, how then would we understand and follow the other verses not explained by Bukhari? Secondly, the explanations put forward are generally absurd. An incident or a story is

narrated around an occurrence which – Bukhari would have it – resulted in the selected Qur'anic verse being revealed. In most cases the incident or story is absurd and one often gets the impression that the revelation of verses was a haphazard affair, owing more to mere accident and whim, than to the Will of Allah. The following Qur'anic verses and their *hadith* 'explanation' illustrate this point.

> **(11:114)** Establish worship at the two ends of the day and in some watches of the night. Lo! Good deeds annul ill deeds. This is a reminder for the mindful.

Bukhari (ref: 6.209), narrated Ibn Masud:

> A man kissed a woman and then came to Allah's Messenger and told him that. So this Divine Inspiration was revealed to the Prophet:
>
> **(11:114)** And offer prayers perfectly at the two ends of the day, and in some hours of the night. Verily the good deeds remove the evil deeds (small sins). This is reminder for the mindful.
>
> The man said, "Is this information for me only?" The Prophet said, "It is for all those of my followers who encounter a similar situation."

Bukhari (Ref: 6.203) Narrated Muhammad bin 'Abbad bin Ja'far that he heard Ibn 'Abbas reciting from the Qur'an:

> **(11:5)** "No doubt! They fold up their breasts."

will note that the *hadiths* which follow the verses directly contradict the Qur'an.

> **(48:29)** Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. And those with him are hard against the disbelievers and merciful among themselves.
>
> **(8:63)** And he has put affection between their hearts. If you had spent all that is on the earth, you could not have produced that affection, but Allah has done it, as His Power and Wisdom are boundless.

Now let us see what Hadith tells about the companions of the Prophet. There are several *hadiths* which describe a conflict between Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Ali, one of which is as follows.

Bukhari (ref 5: 546), narrated Aisha:

> Hazrat Fatima (daughter of Prophet and wife of Hazrat Ali) remained alive for 6 months after the death of the Prophet. When she died Hazrat Ali quietly buried her during the night time and did not inform Hazrat Abu Bakr about her death. As long as Hazrat Fatima lived, Hazrat Ali was greatly respected, but after her death Hazrat Ali felt a change in the behaviour of the people around him. Then he resolved to accept succession to the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr. Thus, he sent a message to Hazrat Abu Bakr, asking him to come to see him personally but not accompanied by Hazrat Omar. Hazrat Omar, on the other hand, apprehended danger and did not like that Hazrat

> Abu Bakr should go alone. However, Hazrat Abu Bakr was bent upon meeting Hazrat Ali and thus he went to see him without company. In the above meeting Hazrat Ali said, "We realise your personal superiority and all that Allah has bestowed upon you. We are not jealous of the greatness which Allah has given you. But we do feel that that being near relatives of the Rasool, we are rightful successors to *Khil'afat* and our right has been usurped by tyranny and oppression."

Selection no. 8

Here we look at the question of intercession. To believe that anyone can intercede on our behalf or have our sins forgiven or our wishes fulfilled, implies belief that Allah has partners. This is polytheism. The Qur'an proclaims that "All intercession belongs to Allah" (39:44), and that there will be "no intercession on the Day of Judgement" (2:254). Examples of verses which corroborate this are as follows: 2:48; 2:123; 6:51,70,94; 7:53; 21:100; 30:13; 36:23; 40:18; 43:86; 74:48.

The Qur'an acknowledges that in spite of the categorical statements that there will be no intercession on the Day of Judgement, as given in the verses above, our human weakness will prompt us to seek the help of living or dead saints and prophets, to intercede on behalf of our loved ones. The Qur'anic verses 2:255, 10:3, 19:87, 20:109, 21:28 and 34:23 throw some light on this. The implication of these verses is that intercession will only be effective in cases already approved by Allah i.e. for those whose own "beliefs and good deeds" are to receive benefit and reward from Allah anyway. Note also the section of verse

> I said: "O Allah's Apostle! Who will be the luckiest person, who will gain your intercession on the Day of Resurrection?" Allah's Apostle said: "O Abu Huraira! I have thought that none would ask me about it before you as I know your longing for the (learning of) *hadiths*. The luckiest person who will have my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who said sincerely from the bottom of his heart "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah."

Bukhari (ref: 1.331), narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah:

> The Prophet said, "I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me:
>
> 1. Allah made me victorious by awe, (by His frightening my enemies) for a distance of one month's journey.
> 2. The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for praying and a thing to perform *tayammum*, therefore, any one of my followers can pray wherever the time of prayer is due.
> 3. The booty has been made *halal* (lawful) for me yet it was not lawful for any one else before me.
> 4. I have been given the right of intercession (on the Day of Resurrection).
> 5. Every Prophet used to be sent to his nation only but I have been sent to all mankind.

Bukhari (ref: 5:224), narrated Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri:

> I heard the Prophet when somebody mentioned his uncle (i.e. Abu Talib), saying, "Perhaps my intercession will be helpful to him on the Day of Resurrection so that he may be put in a shallow fire reaching only up to his ankles. His brain will boil from it."

Bukhari (ref: 6.242), narrated Abdullah Ibn Umar:

> On the Day of Resurrection the people will fall on their knees and every nation will follow their prophet and they will say, "O so-and-so! Intercede (for us with Allah)," till (the right to) intercession will be given to the Prophet (Muhammad) and that will be the day when Allah will raise him to a station of praise and glory.

Bukhari (ref: 8.571), narrated Imran Bin Hossain:

> The Prophet said, "Some people will be taken out of the Fire through the intercession of Muhammad: they will enter Paradise and will be called *Al-Jahannamiyin* (The Hell Fire people)."

Muslim (ref: 0389), narrated Abu Huraira

The Prophet of Allah said: "There is for every apostle a prayer which is granted, but every prophet showed haste in his prayer. I have, however, reserved my prayer for the intercession of my ***ummah*** on the Day of Resurrection, and it would be granted, if Allah so willed, in case of everyone amongst my ***ummah*** provided he dies without associating anything with Allah."

would in reality imply 'to disobey the Prophet instead of obeying him'. Allah clearly instructs the Prophet to '**Follow what is inspired in him (i.e. the Qur'an)**'. And this is shown clearly in the following verses:

> **(10:15)** And when our clear revelations are recited unto them, they who look not for the meeting with Us say: Bring a Lecture other than this, or change it Say (O Muhammad): It is not for me to change it of my own accord, I only follow that which is inspired in me. Lo! If I disobey my Lord I fear the retribution of an awful Day.
>
> **(6:50)** Say (O Muhammad, to the disbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor that I have knowledge of the Unseen; and I say not unto you: Lo! I am an angel. I follow only that which is inspired in me. Say: Are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye not then take thought?
>
> **(6:106)** Follow that which is inspired in thee from thy Lord; there is no god save Him; and turn away from the idolaters.
>
> **(7:203)** And when thou bringest not a verse for them they say: Why hast thou not chosen it? Say: I follow only that which is inspired in me from my Lord. This (Qur'an) is insight from your Lord, and a guidance and mercy for people that believe.
>
> **(10:109)** And (O Muhammed) follow that which is inspired in thee, and forbear until Allah give judgement. And He is the best of judges.

> **(33:2)** And follow that which is inspired in thee from thy Lord. Lo! Allah is aware of what ye do.
> **(46:9)** Say: I am no new thing among the messengers (of Allah), nor know I what will be done with me or you. I do but follow that which is inspired in me, and I am but a plain warner.

What Allah inspires through any prophet is His revelation. For Prophet Muhammad this revelation is undoubtedly contained in the Qur'an. The verses above do not support the following of further interpolations, or hearsay utterances (even if genuine) in any way.

The following verses are used often in support of the Hadiths. Let us examine:

> **(3:32)** Say: Obey Allah and the messenger. But if they turn away, lo! Allah loveth not the disbelievers (in His guidance)

> **(4:80)** Whoso obeyeth the messenger, obeyeth Allah, and whoso turneth away: We have not sent thee as a warder over them.

One must look at these verses in context. They refer to the period when the Prophet was alive and the question of obedience to him was also obedience to Allah, because the Prophet was delivering Allah's message to the people. In fact, Allah asks us in sura 4:49 to "obey also those who are in authority".

The Prophet is now no longer alive and so we cannot obey him directly as people obeyed him when he was

alive. But by following the Qur'an we in effect obey Allah, as well as the Prophet, because the Qur'an as a revelation came out of the Prophet's mouth. Nothing of the sort can be claimed for the Hadiths which are ascribed to him by people (of the most dubious intentions) who collected them and attributed them to him some 250 years later.

It must also be fully understood, that during the lifetime of the Prophet, Muhammad was both the religious and the political leader of the growing Muslim community. As such, he was within his rights to formulate subsidiary laws within the permanent principles laid down by the Qur'an, just as any true Islamic State would be able to do in order to make the laws reflect the relevant period. Our main weakness is that in order to show our reverence and obedience to the Prophet we blindly follow anything that has been quoted as his sayings and practices, without checking against the Qur'an. Unfortunately, our so-called political and religious leaders have taken full advantage of this weakness by fabricating suitable *hadiths* to keep their own control and influence over us.

We must remember that the Qur'an was revealed as a final revelation because the previous revelations were corrupted by human interference. If we now say in one breath that we cannot accept the previous revelations because they have been corrupted by human interference, how can we then say, in the same breath, that the Hadiths are acceptable even though they are the results of human endeavour and, without doubt, many of which contradict the Qur'an? **The Hadiths can never be classed as a revelation.** They are simply a collection of 'reported' sayings and practices of the Prophet in which there is

unquestionably some truth. Their importance however is no more than any book of doubtful historical origin, and should be regarded as such. To esteem such books equal with the Qur'an and to take their teachings as 'the *sunnah* of the Prophet' is to falsify and debase the true meaning of Islam. The Qur'an is the only book of revelation which has remained intact, and only by following its teachings can we establish Allah's *Deen* and bring about peace and unity for mankind.

References:

1. *Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* by Duncan B. Macdonald. Published by Premier Book House 4/5 Katchery Road, Lahore, Pakistan. Summary of p. 87-117.
2. *Sahih Al-Bukhari* - Volumes 1 to 9, Translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Published by Kitab Bhaban, New Delhi, India. All hadiths are taken from Bukhari except a few taken from others (Muslim, and Abu Daud).
3. *The Bible The Qur'an and Science*, by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris. p. 172.
4. *The Holy Qur'an*, by Yusuf Ali. Published by Dar Al Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon, P.O. Box 6089. Note 2634. p. 813.

11. THE FIVE PILLARS

The Hadith literature has condensed Islam into five principles, known as the Five Pillars of Islam. I quote below from Bukhari Vol.1 *hadith* no 7:

> Narrated Ibn Umar: Allah's Messenger said: Islam is based on (the following) five (principles):
>
> **1.** To testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's Messenger.
> **2.** To offer the (compulsory congregational) prayers dutifully and perfectly.
> **3.** To pay *Zakat* (i.e. obligatory charity).
> **4.** To perform *Hajj* (i.e. Pilgrimage to Mecca).
> **5.** To observe fast during the month of Ramadan.

The five principles are also repeated in Bukhari Vol.1, No. 50, Vol. 2, No. 480, Vol. 6, No. 300 and a few others. The foundation of Islam according to the Hadiths comprises of: 1. Belief (Faith); 2. Prayer; 3. *Zakat* (compulsory charity); 4. Fasting; and 5. *Hajj* (pilgrimage).

There is a general misconception among Muslims that the Qur'an is a theoretical Book as it does not give the details, and it is the books of Hadiths that tell us the methods of practising Islam in real life. Under this misapprehension, Muslims have isolated themselves from the Qur'an, since it is believed that the Hadiths give everything that is required to perform the five pillars. Muslim children are made to read the Qur'an parrot fashion without understanding the meaning and, therefore,

except for a few, the vast majority have no clue as to what is recited in the prayers.

Sadly, the result is that the vast majority of us have no knowledge of the guidance given in the Qur'an. The few who understand dare not say anything openly because of the social pressure to conform, while the political leaders find it easier to control people as long as the majority remain ignorant of the teachings of the Qur'an.

Before analysing the five principles, we must emphasise that these five subdivisions not only do not give a full picture of Islam, but also fundamentally distort its real meaning as far as the Qur'an is concerned. In fact, they have become rituals in the extreme; so much so, that all the practical teachings of the Qur'an are totally ignored. We need look no further for the cause of our downfall in all spheres.

11.1 Declaration of Faith/Belief

The Muslim declaration of faith is: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". Yet this seems to defy the central concept of "*Tawhid*" or **the "Oneness of Allah"** as stressed in the Qur'an. Nowhere in the Qur'an are these two concepts linked together. That is, nowhere is the phrase: "There is no God but Him (Allah)" linked with the phrase "and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". A fact about which all but the most unusually informed Muslim is totally ignorant. Let's look at Qur'anic examples:

> **(3:18)** Allah bears witness that there is no God but Him ***(la-ilaha-illa-hu)*** -- and so do the angels,

> **(3:142)** Or deemed ye that ye would enter Paradise while yet Allah knoweth not those of you who really strive, nor knoweth those (of you) who are steadfast?

> **(2:155-157)** And surely We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and crops; but give glad tidings to the steadfast. Who say, when a misfortune striketh them: Lo! we are Allah's and lo! unto Him we are returning. Such are they on whom are blessings from their Sustainer, and mercy. Such are the rightly guided.

The prophets themselves were subjected to very rigorous tests before they were confirmed in their prophethood. Abraham (see section 7.5) was subjected to tests before he was made the leader of mankind. Similarly, Muhammad underwent severe tests as the following verse suggests.

> **(2:214)** Or think ye that ye will enter Paradise while yet there hath not come unto you the like of (that which came to) those who passed away before you? Affliction and adversity befell them, they were shaken as with earthquake, till the messenger (of Allah) and those who believed with him said: When cometh Allah's help? Now surely Allah's help is nigh.

In fact the only way that we can be true to our belief in Allah's Majesty and Oneness is by making sure of our understanding of His Words in the Qur'an, so that we can

follow these as our guidance in everyday life, to the best of our ability.

11.2 *Salat* (Prayer)

Salat is translated mostly as 'prayer' by Yusuf Ali and as 'worship' by Pickthal. There is also the word *ibadat* (pl.) which means acts of devotion or religious observances. This has often been used synonymously with the word '*salat*'. We should note that the word *ibadat* is derived from the root word '*abada*' which means to serve, to worship, to devote to the service of Allah etc. In the Qur'anic context, the word *ibadat* means obedience to the laws of Allah as contained in the Qur'an, and thus, it has a much wider significance than *salat*. The word *salat* can be regarded as one of the duties contained by the word *ibadat*, a term which itself includes all the duties.

In the Qur'an the very first occurrence of a derived word from the root *abada* is found in the fifth verse of the first sura *Al-Fatiha*, in *nabudu*. There are as many as 94 verses in the Qur'an in which a derived form of the root *abada* is used. The word *salat* occurs 67 times in the Qur'an and in the context of the verses which contains the word *salat*, the nearest English word that can be used for *salat* is either prayer or worship. The Qur'an however has used the plural sense for *salat*, indicating that this function, in its entirety, is meant to be carried out collectively. We need to examine further what the Qur'an has to say regarding the practice of *salat* in the sense of prayer and worship. We can then look at the position of the Hadiths on this issue in the light of what the Qur'an has to say. A few of the relevant Qur'anic verses are quoted below:

sense). In contravention of this clear directive, Muslims perform *Zuhr* and *Asr* prayers silently.

Concluding from the verses quoted above, we find that the Qur'an clearly indicates establishing *salat* in the morning, evening and at night i.e. three times. For the day it says: "Lo! Thou hast by the day a chain of business" (73:7). The exception for this is **Friday**, when one must lay aside all business and rush to the mosque. On this occasion, mentioned 'as **the day of the Assembly**', important issues and topics should become part of the sermon, followed by the prayer; not the traditional sermon to which we have sadly become accustomed, which has no relevance to present-day society. As far as the ritual part of the prayer is concerned the Qur'an mentions the standing, bowing, prostration, direction, and the glorification of Allah in the state of prostration. However, Allah says in many verses (e.g. 5:7, 11:5), that He knows what is in our heart, and this implies that the method or the ritual part of the prayer is not of primary importance to Him. This is further confirmed in verse 4:43 which states that we must understand what we say in our prayer.

In some translations of the Qur'an, particularly by Yusuf Ali and M. Asad, the verse 17:78 has been interpreted to mean that it confirms the practice of five daily prayers. Yusuf Ali in note 2275 states:

> The commentators understand here the command for the five daily canonical prayers, viz. the four from the declination of the sun from the zenith to the fullest darkness of the night, and the early morning prayer, *Fajr*, which is usually

> accompanied by a reading of the holy Qur'an. The four afternoon prayers are: *Zuhr*, immediately after the sun begins to decline in the afternoon; *Asr*, in the afternoon; *Magrib* immediately after sunset; and *Isha* after the glow of sunset has disappeared and the full darkness of night has set in. There is difference of opinion as to the meaning of particular words and phrases, but none as to the general effect of the passage.

However Yusuf Ali carefully avoids naming the word or phrase in which there are differences of opinion, as it would then have been difficult for him to interpret the verse without coming into conflict with the tradition of five daily prayers.

The confusion arises in the translation of the phrase *duluk-as-shams* in the verse. Yusuf Ali translates this as 'sun's decline'. M. Asad translates it 'as the time when the sun has passed the zenith'. M. Pickthall translates the phrase as 'going down of the sun' and N.J. Dawood as 'sunset'. The Arabic-English Dictionary by Hans Wehr states *duluk* as: to set, to go down (sun). It also defines the whole phrase *duluk as-shams* as 'sunset'.

Yusuf Ali and M. Asad obviously want to interpret this phrase in a way that confirms what is stated in the Hadiths (i.e. the daily five times prayer). If the real meaning is accepted from the Arabic, then the verse 17: 78 'Establish worship (*salat*) at the going down of the sun (or sunset) until the dark of night[...]' implies the *Magrib* and *Isha* prayers and not the *Zuhr*, *Asr*, *Magrib* and *Isha* prayers as has been suggested. Yusuf Ali also misinterprets verse 20:130 in his note 2655, and 50:39 in his note 4978,

where the word *Hamd* has been interpreted to mean *salat*, instead of its correct meaning as 'praise'. All we can do is to try to keep to the words as used in the Qur'an within the bounds of the Arabic language – rather than stretching the sense to meet our own expectations.

11.2.i The Hadiths on prayer (*salat*) and on the origin of prayer

Hadith literature is often concerned with the ritual part of our prayers i.e. the method, the times and the number of prayers. However, we must remember that any statement by the Hadiths on this issue must not contradict the Qur'an.

According to the Hadiths the method and the times of prayer were revealed to the Prophet in the same way as the Qur'an was revealed (that is, as a direct revelation from Allah). Moreover, it is maintained that Gabriel (*Jibreel*)[A1] demonstrated to the Prophet the method of praying at stated times by leading each of the prayers himself (Bukhari Vol. 1, No. 500 and Vol. 4 No. 444). This immediately raises the question: if the method or the ritual part of the prayer was a revelation, why was it not, then, included in the Qur'an? Do we then accept that the Qur'an is incomplete? On the other hand, if we accept the view that the Qur'an, as the Final Revelation is complete and has remained intact, word for word, and that Allah has taken it upon Himself to protect it, then the above Hadiths must be false. In other words, Gabriel (*Jibreel*)[A1] did not demonstrate to the Prophet the method of the prayers, as stated in the Hadiths.

The question then arises as to how these methods or rituals originated. Before answering this question (section 11.2.ii), it would be useful to discuss the question of the five daily prayers. Bukhari gives us an example of the kind of narration we are expected to swallow regarding this issue in Vol. 1, No. 345, Vol. 4, No. 429 and Vol. 9 No. 608. According to him, the matter was so important that the Prophet was taken by Gabriel (*Jibreel*) to see Allah to settle this issue. According to him, Allah initially ordained fifty prayers a day. However, after a lot of bargaining, in which the Prophet Moses acted as an adviser to the Prophet, Allah relented and reduced the burden to five times a day. What is most surprising is that the Qur'an does not mention such an important journey whatsoever, whereas it mentions historical incidents of much lesser importance. The one Qur'anic verse which, it is claimed, refers to this journey is in Sura 17:1 given below:

> **(17:1)** Glorified be He Who carried His servant by night from the nearest mosque (The *Kaba*) to the farthest mosque, the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, that We might show him some of Our Signs!

There seem to be four different interpretations on this verse:

(i) The majority of commentators take this night to mean that the Prophet was transported by Gabriel (*Jibreel*)[A1] from the nèarest mosque (*Masjid-Al-Haram*) in Mecca to the farthest mosque (*Masjid-Al-Aqsa*) in Jerusalem, (which did not exist at the time), so

presumably they mean the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem or whatever existed there at that time.

(ii) The Hadith literature goes further by stating that the Prophet was taken to see Allah from Jerusalem by Gabriel[A1], and that at that meeting the five daily prayers were sealed.

(iii) The whole journey was spiritual, possibly in a dream.

(iv) That it refers to the flight of the Prophet (*Hijra*) with Abu Bakr from Mecca (where the nearest mosque – the *Kaba* – was) to Medina, where a mosque (the farthest mosque i.e. *Masjid-Al-Aqsa*) was established before Muhammad's arrival there. In support of this there is historical evidence that a delegation of 73 people from Medina came to see the Prophet while he was at Mecca and that the Prophet sent Musab-bin-Umair with the delegation to conduct prayers and help the people in Medina to enter the brotherhood of Islam. The Medinans, therefore, must have built the mosque before the arrival of the Prophet.

The last interpretation seems the most logical since Medina was more conducive to his mission, and was thus a neighbourhood blessed by Allah to be used for the later part of the Prophet's mission. Some indication of this can be found in in the following verses:

> **(93:4,5)** And verily the latter portion will be better for thee than the former, and verily thy Sustainer will give unto thee so that thou will be content.

11.2.ii Format or method of prayer in the Hadiths[1,2]

Bukhari does not give the methods of prayer in a coherent form. One has to go through a lot of his quoted *hadiths* to form some sensible idea. According to Bukhari (Vol.1 No. 346) when Allah enjoined prayer, it was two *rakats*[A4] in every prayer, both when at home or on a journey. Then the prayers offered on journey remained the same, but the *rakats* of the prayers for non-travellers were increased. For example in Hadith (Vol. 1, No. 474), the Prophet leads the prayer with 2 *rakats* for *Zuhr* and 2 *rakats* for *Asr*. In Hadith (Vol. 1, No. 518) the Prophet prayed 8 *rakats* for the *Zuhr* and *Asr* and 7 *rakats* for *Magrib* and *Isha* in Medina. In Hadith (Vol. 1. No. 566) Allah's messenger never missed 2 *rakats* before *Fajr* prayer and 2 *rakats* after *Asr* prayer. In fact, the number of *rakats* of the compulsory prayers i.e. 2 *rakats* for the *Fajr*, 4 *rakats* for the *Zuhr*, 4 *rakats* for *Asr*, 3 *rakats* for *Magrib* and 4 *rakats* for *Isha*, are not specified in Bukhari at all. And the same applies for the *sunnat* prayers that we perform today. It is only after searching through a large number of *hadiths* that we can find what perhaps we are meant to say while performing the set of postures from standing to bending and then in prostration but only, it should be emphasised, after a wide search, and not without variations and contradictions. So one can quite clearly see that Hadith does not give any organised or co-ordinated methods of prayer that can be followed universally. This is an interesting point when you consider how easy it would be for any even moderately educated Muslim to give a precise list of the mechanics of all the daily prayers as prescribed by the 'scholars'. Another important point that comes out is that although *at-tahiyatu* in the sitting

position is mentioned in Bukhari, the *darud* we recite after *at-tahiyatu* is not.

The *hadiths* in Muslim do not give any clear indication of the methods of prayer either. The number of *rakats* of the compulsory prayer is not given in the format as performed at the present time. The only similarity between Bukhari and Muslim is in the set of postures from standing to bending and then the prostration and pronouncements in these positions. Muslim mentions *at-tahiyatu* in the sitting position, and the *darud*. However, the latter is not mentioned by Bukhari at all. Muslim is very clear about the recitation of *Al-Fatiha* in every *rakat*, the main confusion lies in the number of *rakats*, particularly for the compulsory prayers. For example, *hadith* 1017 states that the Prophet performed two *rakats* for Zuhr and two for Asr prayer. This appears to contradict *hadith* 911:

> **(911)** Abu Said al-Khudri reported: The Apostle of Allah used to recite in every *rakat* of the first two *rakat* of the noon (*Zuhr*) prayer about 30 verses and in the last two about fifteen verses, and in every *rakat* of the Asr prayer of the first two *rakats* about fifteen verses and in the last two half of the first ones.

The above *hadith* seems to contradict *hadith* 909 also which states that in the last two *rakats* the Prophet would recite sura *Al-Fatiha* only, and that he would sometimes recite loud enough to make the verses audible. This is at variance with the present-day practice whereby *Zuhr* and *Asr* are performed silently.

Regarding the *Witr* prayer, we see a clear contradiction between *hadiths* nos. 1602, 1604, and 1607, which mention one, five, and three *rakats* respectively.

Concerning the *sunnat* prayers, there seems to be no clear indication. These are prayers which according to 'traditional Islam' are recommended over and above the compulsory prayers. For example, ***hadith*** 1579 states that a house will be built in Paradise for anyone who prays twelve *rakats* in a day and a night.

It is a disturbing fact that, according to the Hadith, the Prophet appears to be wholly occupied with prayers – day and night – as if that were the only thing Allah required of us. The prayers mentioned include his forenoon prayer of four to eight *rakats* (no. 1549); additional prayers at home after leading the compulsory prayers in the mosque; night prayers (*Tahajjud*) after *Isha* leading to the morning prayer (no. 1584; etc.). *Hadith* nos. 927 and 928 state that the Prophet used to recite 60 to 100 verses in the morning prayer. One begins to wonder how the Prophet managed to carry out all his other duties, including the compilation of the Qur'an, the guidance of the people, state activities, plus his many other duties, not to speak of his personal and family life.

The point that can be taken from all this is that the format of all our prayers underwent substantial changes before it was finally established in its present form, and that most of these changes took place well after the death of the Prophet. There is nothing wrong in this as long as we accept that the ritual part of the prayer did not require any revelation. It was purely a common sense way of developing the rules within the boundary conditions (see

verses on the *salat*) specified in the Qur'an, and if the Prophet had not done so, a proper Islamic State would have. The point we must remember is that rituals are only important when we place them in the context of many important duties which Allah has asked us to perform. Otherwise they become just forms without any substance or value.

11.2.iii Conclusion

It has already been stated that the method or the ritual part of the prayer cannot possibly a revelation as it is not in the Qur'an. Yet, a standard question is always raised: as the Hadith gives the method of prayer how could we learn to pray if we ignored the Hadith? We have already shown that Bukhari does not give the format of the prayers that we perform today and that the format of all our prayers underwent substantial changes before it was finally established in its overall present form, and that most of these changes took place well after the death of the Prophet. Besides, there is a gap of about 250 years before the Hadith literature appears (see section 10.1 for discussion on Hadith). So how did the people pray during this time? Obviously, the Prophet must have established a method, by taking into account the principles in the Qur'an and by consulting his companions. There is no difference in this matter than in establishing any subsidiary laws within the bounds of the fundamental principles (see Section 13.5).

Importantly, the Prophet did not record either the method of prayer, or his own sayings and practices. We can only infer from this that he realised that this would have created confusion between the recordings of

his own sayings and practices, and the recordings of the Qur'an. However, a ritual once established, and practised regularly by the Muslim communities of that time was unlikely to have fallen apart, even though it was not written down. Thus, the contention that without the Hadith the practice of *salat* could not be carried out does not hold water. It is a curious fact that, Bukhari has successfully avoided people's outrage on the many denigrating *hadiths* he quoted regarding the Prophet, by means of the simple and yet effective contention that without his investigations and writings on *salat* the practice today would have been impossible – which is evident nonsense. The truth is that a practice which survived for 250 years without the influence of the Hadith, would have continued to survive simply by virtue of its regular practice – passed from generation to generation.

Moreover, the rapid expansion of Islam within a few decades, gave the added resilience to the practice of *salat*. During the Abbaside period, some changes came in the methods and practices of prayer, caused by the four schools of law i.e. Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki and Hanbali. Further changes, particularly in the number of *rakats* to be performed during each prayer time, must have taken place over time due to human interference. Some changes also came due to cultural differences in various parts of the world and one doesn't have to travel too far to see these variations. How do we explain these? And where is the common consensus regarding our methods of prayer?

Note: In this study we have restricted *salat* to its most commonly understood sense of 'the ritual prayer'. **The Qur'an uses the word *salat* in a much wider sense**

than that of simple prayer. We also observe that in the Qur'an the word *salat* is used in the plural number. We have concentrated here on the general meaning of 'prayer' in order to bring out some of our confusion and preoccupation, regarding this everyday practice.

11.2.iv Conflicts between the present-day prayer and the Qur'an – a personal view

The verses recited must be relevant to the prayer. At present, apart from the first sura (*Al-Fatiha*), many of the verses we recite have no relevance to our prayer; that is, we do not know what we are saying or whether it is meaningful for the purpose. For example, in reciting sura 112 in our prayers we say: 'Say: He is Allah, the One![...]' In other words we are telling Allah: 'Say: He is Allah, the One![...]' – a scenario which is ridiculous. Prayer is a supplication of the believer to Allah, and so verses which do not fulfil this purpose are inappropriate. We need to choose what we say – that is, choose verses and *doas* of which there are many – which convey the sense of our supplication to Him. Failing this, it would be better to perform the bowing and prostration immediately after the recitation of the first sura. The utterances we use in the position of bowing and prostration conform to sura 17:107, 108, i.e. the Glorification of Allah in those positions. However there are words in both *at-tahiyatu* and the *darud*, recited in the sitting position, which go against Qur'anic guidance. For example, the words in *at-tahiyatu* translate as:

> All reverence, all worship, all sanctity are due to Allah. Peace be on you O Prophet! and the Mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be on us and the

> righteous sevants of Allah. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.

The inclusion of 'peace be on you, O Prophet' addresses the Prophet in the second person vocative - a grammatical construction which assumes the person addressed is still alive. This is completely wrong, and doubly so since the Qur'an forbids us to make any distinction between the Prophets. The appropriate phrase would be 'Peace be on all the Prophets' as this would conform with the Qur'an **(37:181)**. For explanation on the final part of 'I bear witness...' see section 11.1.

The following verses give further relevant points on prayer.

> **(72:18,19)** And the places of worship are only for Allah. So invoke not anyone along with Allah: And when the slave of Allah (the Prophet) stood up in prayer to Him, they crowded on him, almost stifling.

> **(72:20)** Say (unto them, O Muhammad): I pray unto Allah only, and ascribe unto Him no partner.

We need to understand that the form of prayer we use is a ritual, although this ritual performed in congregation is important as it helps to bring people together. But the function of the mosque must be more than just a place for performing the congregational prayer. The Imam or the person who leads the prayer should be a scholar well versed in the Qur'an so he can use it meaningfully and be able to arrange lectures or seminars on the Qur'an. It is

important, too, that the mosque be open for community and social functions beneficial to the society, instead of being kept empty except at prayer times (see section 11.2.v).

There are many Qur'anic verses relevant to prayer. I have selected a few, including some from the verses of prayer which the Prophets performed during their lifetimes.

> **(2:286)** [...]O our Sustainer! condemn us not if we forget, or fall into error. O our Sustainer! Lay not on us such a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us! Impose not on us that which we have not the strength to bear! Pardon us, absolve us and have mercy on us! Thou art our Protector, so grant us succour against those who reject Thee.
>
> (A general prayer verse)

> **(2:127, 128)** And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House, (**Abraham** prayed): Our Sustainer! Accept from us (this duty). Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Hearer, the Knower. Our Sustainer! and make us submissive unto Thee and of our seed a nation submissive unto Thee, and show us our ways of Prayer, and relent towards us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Relenting, the Merciful.

> **(7:155)** And **Moses** chose seventy of his people for Our place of meeting; when they were seized with violent quaking. He prayed: O my Sustainer if it had been Thy Will Thou couldst have destroyed, long before, both them and me: wouldst Thou destroy us for the deeds of the

foolish ones amongst us? This is no more than Thy trial: by it Thou causest whom Thou wilt to stray, and Thou leadest whom thou wilt into the right path. Thou art our Protector: so forgive us and give us Thy mercy; for Thou art the Best of those who forgive.

(5:118) If Thou punish them, lo! they are Thy slaves, and if Thou forgive them (lo! they are Thy slaves) Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Mighty, the Wise.

(Prayer of **Jesus**).

(23:97, 98) O our Sustainer! I seek Thy protection against the incitements of the rebellious ones and I seek Thy protection, lest they should approach me.

(Prayer of **Muhammad**).

Other instances of verses of in the Quran which we can use in our supplication to Allah are: 2:127,128,201,286; 3:8,16,26,27,38,53,191,192,193,194; 4:75; 5:83,84; 7:23,126; 11:45; 12:101; 14:40,41; 20:25,2,27,28,29,114; 21:83,87,89,112; 23:28,29,93,94,97, 98,118; 24:65,61; 25:74; 26:83,84,85; 27:19; 37:100.

Finally, we must remember that Allah is always near (2:186). He will listen to us and help us if we pray to Him, provided we are following 'the straight path'. If, instead of glorifying Him and praying for our guidance, we tell Him what is in the Qur'an by reciting verses which have no relevance to our prayers, then I cannot see how He can

benefit us. We can reach Him, but only by hearing His call and His guidance - all of which involves good deeds.

> **(2:186)** When My servants ask you concerning Me, tell them that I am always near. I hear the prayer of the suppliant whenever he calls out to Me. Therefore, let them hear My call and put their trust in Me, that they may be rightly guided.

11.2.v The role of the mosque:

At present we have magnified the importance of the five daily prayers out of all proportion to our other duties specified in the Qur'an. Let me explain this by means of an example: in the U.K. the Muslims have established over 700 mosques, almost exclusively for the purpose of prayers. It is impossible to use these mosques for any sensible discussion on the Qur'an or for issues which face Muslims in this country, unless our views are in conformity with those of the governors and the Imam. The result is that these mosques are totally underused. Enormous sums have been spent in their construction, but the Muslims can hardly use them except for prayers. The only sermon that one gets from the Imam is before the Friday prayer and in that the topics are mostly based on the Hadiths and are hardly understood by the younger generation. So little is invested in the education of the younger generation that with the demise of the older generation the mosques will suffer the same fate as the churches in this country i.e.they will either remain empty or become bingo halls. Moreover, continual in-fighting for the control of the mosque is so common that people are moving away in disgust. Hence, unless we are able to put well-educated Imams in the mosques, Imams who have

been brought up in this country, who can communicate with the younger generation, who are able to organise seminars on important issues and are able to organise some sensible teaching of the Qur'an for the younger generation, the future looks extremely bleak for Muslims in this country. People who are interested in organising lectures or education for the benefit of the community are not able to use these mosques. Instead, they have to use a church hall or some other rented hall and thereby incur unnecessary expenses.

11.3 *Zakat* (see section 12.3.iii)

11.4 Fasting

In the month of Ramadan Muslims are to fast from dawn to sunset (see note at the end of this section). The following verses clarify this principle further.

> **(2:183)** O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, even as it was prescribed for those before you, that ye may ward off (evil).
>
> **(2:184)** (Fast) a certain number of days (designated for fasting); if one is ill or travelling, an equal number of other days may be substituted; and for those who can afford it there is a ransom: the feeding of a man in need -- but if one volunteers (more righteous works), it is better for him. But fasting is better for you if you only knew.
>
> **(2:185)** The month of Ramadan in which was revealed The Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of

right and wrong). And whosoever of you is present, let him fast the month, and whosoever of you is sick or on a journey, (let him fast the same) number of other days. Allah desireth for you ease; He desireth not hardship for you; and (He desireth) that ye should complete the period, and that ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that peradventure ye may be thankful.

(2: 187) It is made lawful for you to go unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are raiment for you and ye are raiment for them. Allah is aware that ye are deceiving yourselves in this respect and He hath turned in mercy toward you and relieved you. So hold intercourse with them and seek that which Allah hath ordained for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becometh distinct to you from the black thread of dawn. Then strictly observe fast till nightfall and touch them not, but retreat to the mosque [see section 11.4.i]. These are the limits imposed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus Allah expoundeth His revelations to mankind that they may ward off evil.

Note: In places where the duration of the day is very long compared to the middle nations, i.e. the Middle-Eastern countries, the duration of the fasting should be based on logic and reason. Surely Allah would not want anyone in such places to bear more hardship than others living in the Middle East, where the average duration of the day is about 12 hours. This is supported by verse 2:185 above.

11.4.i Traditionally, the fast is understood to serve the following purposes:

(i) Submission to the Will of Allah according to the Qur'anic injunction.

(ii) Promotion of a sense of compassion for those currently suffering economic hardship.

(iii) The devotion of the month in prayer and meditation in the mosque.

The traditional thinking of (i) and (ii) above are valid, but as far as (iii) is concerned, prevalent understanding is wrong, as it goes against the very concept of what the Qur'an is trying to teach us. The point is clarified by looking at additional prayers (*taraveeh*) that are performed by Muslims during the month of Ramadan.

11.4.ii *Taraveeh* prayers during Ramadan

> **(2:187)** [...] then strictly observe the fast till nightfall and touch them not, but retreat (*akfa*) to the mosques.

The Arabic root *akfa* means 'to retire', 'to withdraw', 'to devote' or 'to be busy'. During the month of Ramadan Allah expects us to spend some time in the mosque. The question is: what does Allah mean by this? We know that the Qur'an was first revealed during the month of Ramadan, which is therefore a holy month. Muslims have interpreted this time in the mosque to be spent in additional prayers varying from eight to twenty *rakats* every night during the whole of Ramadan. The person or persons who lead the prayers are supposed to complete the recitation of the whole Qur'an at least once during this month. The recitation is carried out at very fast speed

in spite of the Qur'anic instruction: "[...] and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones" (**73:4**). Those who attend the prayers stand in devotion listening to this very fast recitation without understanding a word of it. They attend because they are under the impression that Allah will shower them with His blessing for this devotion. Usually a *hafez* (one who has memorised the whole Qur'an) leads the prayer. People also attend the mosque in vast numbers on the 27th day of Ramadan hoping to secure additional blessings. This is because this particular night is taken as the 'Night of Power' which is 'better than a thousand months', as the Qur'an was first revealed on this night. On this night the angels, by permission of their Sustainer, descend on the earth with all the decrees (97:1-5). However the date 27th Ramadan is based on tradition as the exact date or night is not specified in the Qur'an.

Let us now see if there is any logic in this method of reciting the whole Qur'an without understanding what is being recited (see verse 73:4 above, and also section 11.2). Effectively, what the Muslims are doing is telling Allah what is in the Qur'an. But Allah already knows what is in the Qur'an. He does not require this reminder. What He wants is for the believers to understand the Qur'an so that they can be guided by its teachings, and what better time than the month of Ramadan to renew our understanding of the Qur'an! What needs to be done is for people who look after the mosques to organise lectures and seminars by inviting scholars who are well-versed in the Qur'an. In fact, all the mosques should publish their program in advance so that people can attend lectures and seminars according to what suits them best, to enhance their knowledge of the Qur'an. One would not

be required to attend every day or night but only at those times that would help him or her enhance their knowledge of the Qur'an, and thereby propagate the *deen* to mankind. Obviously, there would still be times allocated for prayers, prayers to thank and praise Allah and to ask for His mercy and forgiveness. However, there is no point simply following a ritual which has no meaning. The Hadith literature states that the *taraveeh* prayer was not introduced during the time of the Prophet but later during the Caliphate of Omar, and as is usual, most Muslims follow blindly what is in the Hadith instead of getting their guidance from the Qur'an. **Of course, the Qur'an is there to recite from, but the main point is that we must try and understand its message**. In fact, by following this message and by discussion and implementation of the structure of the *deen* in everyday life, we could propagate a social order to the world which would be both exemplary and beneficial. Note the instruction and the warning in the following verse:

> **(3:187)** And (remember) when Allah laid a charge on those who had received the Scripture: Ye are to expound it to mankind and not to hide it. But they flung it behind their backs and bought thereby a little gain. Verily, evil is that which they have gained thereby.

11.4.iii Physical benefits of fasting[3]

Over the past 100-150 years, the diet of mankind has changed dramatically. Our food -- once fresh, wholesome, unrefined and unsprayed -- is now frozen, canned or refined and treated with all manner of toxic pesticides, preservatives, colourings and other chemicals.

The accumulation of waste matter or toxins in our body is a major cause of disease. And overeating is one cause of this accumulation. Fasting may well be the key to purifying our bodies.

During fasting there is an increase in the amount of energy available for the eliminative process, due to the absence of large amounts of food requiring digestion and assimilation, both of which require energy. The body is able to redirect this increased energy towards the elimination of the obstructions to the vital life force i.e. the toxins. During the first three days of fasting, the elimination activity is manifested by the appearance of a coated tongue, bad breath, headaches, muscular aches, diarrhoea/constipation and general debility. These symptoms are due to the increase of toxins in the blood stream and their passing out via the channels of elimination. The sooner these unpleasant symptoms appear, the more toxic the system. By the fourth day, one may find eliminations are much reduced. This is usually accompanied by a feeling of well-being, greater clarity of mind and abundant energy. This condition lasts in degrees of varying intensity, interspersed with periods of a lack of energy, fatigue and difficulty in concentration as more toxins are eliminated. This period lasts until about the tenth day when a healing crisis may occur. During this process the body is able to eliminate a large number of deep-seated toxins and waste matter. This manifests itself in various ways -- from flu-like symptoms to skin eruptions or other eliminative processes. After this, a person will once again experience a further improvement in health and vigour.

Fasting should always be terminated with extreme care. Usually, a little fruit is ideal. Main meals should be moderate in quantity and consist of best quality natural food (no junk), since the body will be building tissues from this material.

Ramadan thus provides an ideal opportunity for initiating this necessary change through self-discipline and purification.

11.5 *Hajj* (Pilgrimage to Mecca)

The Arabic word *Hajj* is also its own root i.e. is not derived from any other word. It means to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca. A derived word, *Hajja*, means to argue against each other, to debate or to reason. The word *Hajj* appears in the Qur'an ten times and every time the command is directed to **all mankind** and not to Muslims alone. The fact that *Hajj* is addressed to mankind implies among other things, that the ultimate aim of the Almighty is to unite human beings, and this will only be possible when *deen*, the way of life beneficial to mankind, is established. The word *Hajja* indicates a greater and a more comprehensive purpose for *Hajj* than what is implied by the procedural part. This greater purpose is outlined at the end in section 11.5.ii.

At present, the *Hajj*, as performed, consists basically of prayer and associated rituals, all of which we perform meticulously. The Qur'an gives brief indications but no details of what the rituals should consist of. In contrast, the Hadith gives us exacting details, and as a result of following these slavishly we have lost the main meaning of *Hajj*. There is a huge volume of Hadith literature on

Hajj (which may or may not be true) and it is by following this that we have ceased striving to extract the true point from *Hajj*. The result of all this is the loss of significance of *Hajj*. Muslims have come to regard the *Hajj* as a system, to be followed meticulously, and a way to wipe out all past sins. This is perhaps one of the reasons why people who can afford to perform the *Hajj* frequently. As far as the ritual part is concerned the details are not drawn from revelation but come under the domain of subsidiary laws (see section 13.5). This forces us to acknowledge the issue about whether one performs the *Hajj* in the simple way given in the Qur'an or in a more complicated way as given by the Hadith literature. One must also remember that the ritual part has been going on for the last 1400 years, and that there was no Hadith literature to guide people during the first few hundred years of this period, and so whatever form of practice that existed during that period must have been continued. The verses which give the fundamentals of *Hajj* are listed below. They are followed by a brief outline of the *Hajj* procedure, with references to the verses listed. Finally, the real implication of *Hajj* is discussed.

> **(3: 96, 97)** Lo! The first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca (Makka), a blessed place, a guidance to the peoples; Wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. **And Pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind for him who is able to undertake it**. As for him who disbelieveth, (let him know that) lo! Allah is Independent of (all) creatures.

(22:27-29) And proclaim unto mankind the Pilgrimage. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine; that they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He hath bestowed on them. Then eat thereof and feed therewith the poor unfortunate. Then let them make an end to their unkemptness (self-denial) and let them fulfil the vows which they (may) have made, and let them go (once again) around the ancient House.

(2:125) And when We made the House (at Mecca) a resort for mankind and a sanctuary, (saying): Take as your place of worship the place where Abraham stood (to pray). And We imposed a duty upon Abraham and Ismael (saying): Purify my House for those who go around and those who meditate therein and those who bow down and prostrate themselves (in worship).

(2:158) Lo! (the mountains) *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwah* are among the indications of Allah. It is therefore no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House (of God) or visiteth it, to go around them. And he who doeth good of his own accord, lo! Allah is Responsive, Aware.

(2:196) Perform the pilgrimage and the visit (to Makka) for Allah. And if you are prevented, then send such gifts as can be obtained with ease, and shave not your heads until the gifts have reached their destination. And whoever among you is sick

or hath an ailment of the head must pay a ransom of fasting or almsgiving or offering. And if you are in safety, then whosoever contenteth himself with the visit for the pilgrimage (shall give) such gifts as can be had with ease. And whosoever cannot find (such gifts), then a fast of three days while on the pilgrimage, and of seven when ye have returned; that is, ten in all. That is for him whose folk are not present at the Inviolable Place of Worship. Observe your duty to Allah, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.

(2:197) The pilgrimage is (in) the well-known months, and whoever is minded to perform the pilgrimage therein (let him remember that) there is (to be) no lewdness nor abuse nor angry conversation on the pilgrimage. And whatsoever good you do Allah knoweth it. So make provision for yourselves (Hereafter); for the best provision is to ward off evil. Therefore keep your duty unto Me, O men of understanding.

(2:198, 199) It is no sin for you that ye seek the bounty of your Lord. But, when ye press on in the multitude from 'Arafat, remember Allah by the sacred monument. Remember Him as He hath guided you, although before ye were of those astray. Then hasten onward from the place whence the multitude hasteneth onward, and ask forgiveness of Allah. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

(2:200-202) And when you have completed your devotions, then remember Allah as you remember

your fathers or with a more lively remembrance. But of mankind is he who saith: "Our Lord! Give unto us in the world," and he hath no portion in the Hereafter. And of them (also) is he who saith: "Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire". For them there is in store a goodly portion out of that which they have earned. Allah is swift in reckoning.

(2:203) Remember Allah through the appointed days. Then whoso hasten (his departure) by two days, it is no sin for him, and whoso delay, it is no sin for him; that is for him who wards off (evil). Be careful of your duty to Allah, and know that unto Him you will be gathered.

(5:1) O ye who believe! Fulfil your undertakings. The beast of cattle is made lawful unto you (for food) except that which is announced unto you (herein), game being unlawful when ye are on the pilgrimage. Lo! Allah ordaineth that which pleaseth Him.

(5:96) To hunt and to eat the fish of the sea is made lawful for you, a provision for you and for seafarers; but to hunt on land is forbidden you so long as ye are on the pilgrimage. Be mindful of your duty to Allah, unto Whom you will be gathered.

(22:34) And for every nation We have appointed a ritual, that they may mention the name of Allah over the beast of the cattle that He has given them

for food; and your God is one God, therefore surrender unto Him. And give good tidings (O Muhammad) to the good.

(22:36, 37) And the camels! We have appointed them among the ceremonies of Allah. Therein you have much good. So mention the name of Allah over them when they are drawn up in lines. Then when their flanks fall (dead), eat thereof and feed the beggar and the suppliant. Thus have We made them subject unto you, that haply you may give thanks. Their flesh and their blood reach not Allah, but the devotion from you reaches Him. Thus have We made them subject unto you that you may magnify Allah that He has guided you. And give good tidings (O Muhammad) to the good.

11.5.i *Hajj* procedure

Hajj and *Umrah* are ordained for those who can afford it (3:97). *Hajj* is observed during a few days of the month of *Zul-Hijjah*, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar. *Umrah* can be described as a shortened version of *Hajj* and can be observed any time.

The *Hajj* as practiced now begins with a bath or shower, followed by a state of sanctity called *Ihraam* where the man wears two white seamless sheets of cloth and the woman a modest dress. Throughout *Hajj*, the Pilgrim needs to abstain from sexual intercourse, avoid shaving and cutting of hair and the use of bad language (2:197). On arrival at the Mosque (*Kaba*) the pilgrim, (man or woman) walks round the *Kaba* seven times, while glorifying and praising Allah (2:125, 22:29). The usual

utterance is: "*Labbayka Allahumma Labayk*" (O Allah I have responded to You). "*Labbayka Laa Shareeka Laka Labbayk*" (I have responded to You, and I proclaim that there is no other God beside You; I have responded to You). The next step, is to go round the two small hills nearby called *As-Safa* and *Al-Marwah* seven times (2:158). However, the present construction by the Saudis does not allow this; one can only walk between the hills. This completes the *Umrah* portion of the Pilgrimage. The pilgrim then goes to *Arafat*, which is a very big field, to spend a day of prayer, meditation and glorification of Allah (2:198) from dawn to sunset. After sunset, the pilgrim goes to *Muzdalifah* where the night prayer is observed. From *Muzdalifah*, the pilgrim goes to *Mina* to spend two or three days (2:203). 21 pebbles are picked up for the symbolic stoning of Satan (Devil) at *Mina*. Also at *Mina* the customary practice of sacrificing an animal is supposed to commemorate the incident when Abraham almost sacrificed Ishmael. The pilgrim then returns to Mecca and observes a farewell rotation of the *Kaba* seven times. This completes **the traditional *Hajj*.**

Note: The reason for the sacrifice of an animal is found in the Hadith literature which assumes, like the Biblical story, that Isaac was redeemed through the sacrifice of a lamb. For Qur'anic references on this see section 7.5. The Qur'an nowhere mentions Abraham sacrificing a lamb. According to the Qur'an, the sacrifice of animals should only be for food (22: 28, 34 and 36) since a tremendous number of people have to be fed during this period. In verse 2:196, Allah says that if at any time you are prevented from going there you should send whatever you can as a gift (*hadiya*) to be used by those who have assembled there. The slaughter of millions of animals

throughout the world at this time to commemorate an incident which did not really take place, has no basis in the Qur'anic revelation. Instead of a blood sacrifice, Ishmael was redeemed by Allah imposing on Abraham and him a far greater duty: that of building and purifying the House of Allah for mankind, and of working for the cause of Allah (see section 7.5). Also, as quoted in verse 22:37, Allah says categorically that the blood and the meat of animals slaughtered do not reach Him. Moreover the Qur'an does not require the sacrifice of animals throughout the world in that specific period. It simply allows for the slaughter of animals in the place of *Hajj* for the purpose of food, including the feeding of the poor. Again, it seems that the Muslims are more interested in what the Hadiths have to say than the guidance given in the Qur'an.

11.5.ii The real significance of *Hajj*

The real significance of *Hajj* becomes more obvious as we consider the meaning of the word *Hajja* which is derived from the root word *Hajj*. The meaning of this word, as stated before, is: to debate, to argue, or to consult. If this is the key to the meaning of the Muslim Pilgrimage, the question is: how can this be achieved? We know that the annual Pilgrimage draws Muslims together from the whole of the Islamic world. It is, therefore, an ideal opportunity to strengthen the unity and understanding of mankind and to create fellowship in the world. This can be achieved by using the week before the *Hajj* or the week after the *Hajj*, (and if necessary over a longer period) for consultation, discussion and examination of schemes and projects which are thought to be beneficial. The period of the Pilgrimage could, within a matter of

years, become an effective instrument for the promotion of knowledge and co-operation between peoples, with the ultimate object of implementing the structure of the *deen* in everyday life (see chapter 16: *The Islamic State*). By practising what the Qur'an teaches, the *deen* will permeate the entire world community and thus fulfil the basic requirement of *Hajj* which is meant for the whole of mankind.

References:

1. *Sahih Al-Bukhari* - Volumes 1 to 9, Translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan.
Published by Kitab Bhaban, New Delhi, India.

2. *Sahih Muslim* - Translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi. Volume 1.
Muhammad Ashraf Publishers and Booksellers,
7 Aibak Road (New Anarkali) Lahore - 7 (Pakistan).

3. *Ramadan -- A Time for Change*: Lecture by David Stokes.
Section 11.4.iii summarised from lecture notes.

12. ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF THE QUR'AN[1]

12.1 Introduction

The Qur'an prohibits interest (*riba*) in the strongest terms. Therefore, the pillar of an economic system based on the Qur'an must be fundamentally opposed – not only to the total rejection of interest in all forms – but also to whatever that bears any resemblance to it. The following verses give some indication of the Qur'anic requirements:

> **(2:278)** O ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah, and give up what remaineth (due to you) from usury, if ye are (in truth) believers.
>
> **(2:279)** And if ye do not, then be warned of war (against you) from Allah and His messenger. And if ye repent, then ye have your principal (without interest). Wrong not, and ye shall not be wronged.
>
> **(3:130)** O ye who believe! Devour not usury, doubling and quadrupling (the sum lent). Observe your duty to Allah, that ye may be successful.
>
> **(4:61)** And of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people's wealth by false pretences, We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom.
>
> **(30:39)** That which ye give in usury in order that it may increase on (other) people's property hath

> no increase with Allah; but that which ye invest as *zakat*, seeking Allah's countenance, hath increase manifold.

Note: In verse 30:39, the phrase 'invest in *zakat*' has been used in place of the traditional translation 'give in charity'. Section 12.3.iii gives the reasons for this.

Today, most modern economies are based on interest to such an extent that it is difficult to imagine any economic activity where interest was not involved directly or indirectly. Many Muslims have attempted to resolve this contradiction between what the Qur'an demands and the principles of a modern economy, but as yet no viable system has been developed. The so-called Islamic countries which shook off the yoke of colonialism have remained intellectually and economically controlled from outside. The conclusion one comes to after such a long and singular failure on the part of such countries is that any suggested economic system cannot be implemented and tested without the prior establishment of a true Islamic State (see chapter 16).

During the early years of Islam (i.e. the first few hundred years) when the Qur'an was the only source of guidance for the Muslims, an economic system based on the Qur'an was well established, and without doubt this would have flourished even further with time, if only the Muslims had not deviated from the Qur'an, and thereby lost their status as a major world power. The vacuum which resulted from the Muslims' neglect of the Qur'an and subsequent decline was filled by the West which, as we see today, has an economy largely based on interest.

The basis of the ideal economic system is in the Qur'an. As in most things, the Qur'an gives the fundamental principles and leaves the details to be filled in by human beings according to the need of the society. However, at no stage of their experience should human beings transgress the fundamental limits set up by the Creator.

12.2 The present day's global economic control

The following section (12.2.i) is taken from an article named, *Islam: Taking root in Europe*, by Sahib Mustaqim Bleher. The section following **(12.2.ii)** includes part of an article published in *The Guardian* of 9th Jan. '87, by F. Clairmonte and J. Cavanagh, on the unprecedented debt crisis facing the Third World, preceded by my own comments.

12.2.i

> Every ideology has its basic underlying philosophy: Capitalism emphasises the individual 'free will', Communism equates the value of man with his productive capacity, and Modern Philosophy stresses the relativity of everything. **The underlying philosophical notion of Islam is balance**. When Allah created the world, everything was in its right place. Through the subsequent interaction of numerous entities and forces in the world, this order is continuously being disturbed. The balance will be lost, unless and until this imbalance is redressed, and humanity returned onto the right, straight and even path. This principle can be applied to all spheres of human experience. The over-rating of material

advancement has stifled spiritual advancement; as a consequence, uncontrolled pollution has disturbed ecological equilibrium; greed has produced a world of contrasts through an unfair distribution of resources; the world's leading societies' careless comfort has brought war to the doorsteps of countless nations. In all these examples the visible imbalance can be equated with the injustice of some towards others. To restore the balance inevitably means fighting injustice. Islam, therefore, can never be a mere private religion practised in homes and monasteries. If it is not political, it is not Islam.

The Qur'an's account of Pharonic society tells us that human society rests on three pillars: The social, political and military sphere (represented by Pharaoh); the economic sphere (represented by Qaroon/Corah); and the ideological sphere of education, religion and media-propaganda (represented by Haman). The three are inter-related, and the fight against oppression will remain unsuccessful, if directed against one without the other two. This is what has happened in the past. When various bands of nationalism within the Muslim world shook off the yoke of colonialism, the result was the creation of countries which got rid of a foreign political elite, but remained intellectually and economically controlled from outside. The Islamic revival of various Muslim movements around the world concentrated exclusively on the spiritual aspects of Islam, the need for the refinement of the individual's character, and was consequently

unable to free anybody from political and economic bondage. Muslim attempts at economic reforms were limited to minor issues, for they did not address the question of political and media control. It seems that most, if not all, the Muslim movements over the last few centuries have been fooled by Western divide-and-rule-policy in that they adopted a dialectically and analytically fragmented approach in their effort, rather than the holistic approach that Islam demands. Modern materialistic society has such refined mechanisms of control in place that its injustice can be passed off as a just cause. Its rejection of divine law and emphasis of individualism renders the individual isolated and helpless against bureaucratic human regulation. Its media propaganda machine turns falsehood into truth by effectively filtering all available information to a permitted norm as well as twisting the perception of events through classic double-speak. Its ever growing drugs and narcotic industry sedates people to a point where they become indifferent to the suffering of others, unable to relate, unmotivated, and turn all their potential energies for change inwardly against themselves. Its political institutions provide justification of the most perverse deeds of injustice by an elaborate process of "decision-making" which effectively rubber stamps any action the elite wishes to take. Its economic system clearly uses the instrument of interest for continuing re-distribution of wealth away from its producers to a small clique of monopolists who have mortgaged the life of almost every individual on earth.

Present-day global economic control is a marvellous example of how the mind can be made to believe things that are not real. It started with the early goldsmiths who took people's valuables for safe keeping in their vaults. They soon started to realise that none of the depositors ever asked for all the money/or monies back, but withdrew small portions of it at a time, and they could safely lend the remainder of people's money against interest, as long as they kept enough to meet day-to-day demands. More than that, they could often get away with lending more than they had, as the recipient of a promissory note would not normally exchange it back into coin, but be happy with a title deed to coinage he thought was kept safely in the goldsmith's vaults. Thus, the goldsmiths became the first bankers and gradually, by way of deception, defrauded more and more people out of their hard-earned property. With the wide-spread use of paper money, cheques, plastic cards and electronic money transfers, this business has taken on gigantic proportions, and bankers now control all significant enterprises including governments. As, historically, the money-lending profession was forbidden to Christians, and still is, or should be, forbidden to Muslims, Jewish families were the first to establish themselves in this business and to date control it almost exclusively. Little surprise, therefore, that Zionism almost always gets its way with governments who find themselves in ever-increasing debt.

> In 1865 Abraham Lincoln stated his monetary policy: 'Money is the creature of law, and the creation of the original issue of money should be maintained as the exclusive monopoly of national government. Money possesses no value to the State other than given to it by circulation[...]

Government should stand behind its currency and credit and the bank deposits of the nation. No individual should suffer a loss of money through depreciation of inflated currency or bankruptcy. Government possessing the power to create and issue currency and credit as money [...] need not and should not borrow capital at interest as a means of financing governmental work and public enterprise.' These words need no updating over a hundred years later. But Lincoln was assassinated, and money-lenders stayed in power. In America this power is exercised by the Federal Reserve which issues the nation's money instead of the government. John F. Kennedy was about to take this right away from them, but then he, too, got assassinated. **This money-power has upset the balance more than any other means of control.** Fertile, self-sufficient countries were plunged into debt and made dependent on outside aid. Yet, the West's income from interest payments is a multiple of Third World Aid dispatched by the West. Only the interest income goes on to the lenders, whereas the aid bill is footed by the people and their governments. Considering that this evil money-power is at the root of some of the worst injustice troubling our planet -- war, pollution, starvation, social disorder -- Muslims should be amongst the first to fight it. Considering that this creation of money out of nothing, this usurpation of wealth by crooked means is almost taking the shape of playing god - a sign of the *Dajjal*, the false Messiah -- it should be the most important issue on the Muslim's agenda. For good reason, interest has been forbidden in Islam. Yet

> Muslims happily pray in mosques built with interest money, and the so-called Islamic banks happily contend themselves with trying to beat the others at the game. Instead of offering a real alternative, they simply change the labels and shamelessly call it fair partnership, when they get half the profits of an entrepreneur's hard labour after lending him some money, which cost them nothing.[2]

12.2.ii Unprecedented debt crisis facing the Third World

We now turn our attention to some of the Western nations who pride themselves on their 'democracy' and 'freedom', yet whose attitudes and behaviour towards other nations often lack both of these virtues in the extreme. The reason for this is that the people who govern these countries can only stay in power by promising a constantly rising standard of living, which in most cases is achieved by robbing the Third World. Most of these rich nations behave like money sharks. They corrupt the people who rule the Third World countries by giving huge loans for imports which in most cases the country does not need but accepts under political coercion. Thus, huge debts are built up under pressure. The political leaders can do very little to resist, since they correctly surmise that they would be liquidated and then replaced by people who would again be subservient to the rich nations. Very often these Third World leaders are pressurised to hand out contracts to the foreign countries by accepting huge bribes as well as by taking an undisclosed share of the profits. This has made it impossible for any genuine Third World leader, who

wants to improve the well being of his countrymen, to succeed.

If such leaders somehow survive, then they are branded as communist or undemocratic in the press and every possible pressure is applied to get rid of them. I would be failing in my duty not to mention this great exploitation and the tragic consequences that are bound to follow. The money lending, and the huge interest that is collected, are crippling these countries. A point has been reached where the cumulative interest payments outweigh the original loan and the debt has become so big that it would be impossible to pay back the original debts, so that the interest payments will go on forever. The loans are designed so that the money sharks can go on making money out of the miseries of the Third World. The Church seems to have nothing to say about this global problem. Below I quote from an article published in *The Guardian* of 9th Jan '87 by F. Clairmonte and J. Cavanagh on the unprecedented debt crisis facing the Third World. It is almost ten years since the article was published. The condition of Third World countries since then has gone from bad to worse, and the only reason for this, is **the exploitation through the medium of interest payments**, which the Qur'an forbids in no uncertain terms.

> The Third World is facing an unprecedented financial crisis, with its debts growing exponentially whilst its export earnings are plummeting. Gigantic amounts of capital are thus flowing from the poor to the rich countries. The upshot is that in 1981, for the first time in post-war history, Third World countries have become

net capital exporters. In other words their debt service payments exceeded new borrowing and rescheduling. Between 1981 and 1985 net capital export for Latin America moved from US$0.2 to US$42.4 billion or an 85 fold increase; in Africa from US$5.3 billion to US$21.5 billion, and Asia from US$1.7 billion to US$9.7 billion. These net capital flows exclude profit repatriations by Third World based transitional companies and capital flights, as well as Middle East exporters. If these additions were thrown into the scale the aggregate outflows would not be far short of US$230-240 billion. This is the sum four times larger than that of the Marshall Plan; and it must be emphasised, the Marshall Plan aid was repaid with interest to the United States. In contrast, this tribute from the poor to the rich countries will not be repaid. Aggravating this terrifying configuration is the direction of the international bank lending which topped US$216 billion in 1985. The industrial economies, as usual, absorbed almost the totality: US$194 as compared with US$119 billion in 1984. The under-developed took only US$3 billion (1984): a derisory sum amounting to around 2 per cent of their global interest payments. Of vital importance is the role played by the commodity price forecasts of the World Bank, which simply have no claim to scientific validity. The World Bank's forecasts of commodity prices were generally higher than the actual price movements of all the commodities since 1980. The fraudulent nature of these World Bank forecasts -- designed to boost the over-supply of commodities and thus lower prices -- is being recognised by a

> growing body of intelligent technocrats in the Third World. The outcome, like a Greek tragedy, is ineluctable: Third World countries are literally being driven to market fatter and fatter volumes of commodities at lower and lower prices on the global market in return for higher priced goods and service imports. In fact, neither can the principal nor the interest ever be repaid. Nor is it desirable that the debt (interest and principal) should be repaid. Debt repudiation stands out as the only ethically feasible and rational solution for the Third World.[3]

Similar exploitation is suffered by the ordinary people even within the rich countries. Rules, similar to those used against the Third World are applied. The whole financial system is geared in such a way that it disadvantages the people who needs money as against those who already have the sources. Even the newspapers rarely publicise the enormous suffering that common people undergo at the hands of money sharks. Sadly the Church, too, is entirely silent on these issues.

No wonder Allah has forbidden usury and has clearly stated the need to use surplus wealth for the benefit of humanity.

12.3 Some important economic concepts used in the Qur'an

12.3.i Charity

(Applicable until the time when Qur'anic Social Order is established).

12.3.ii *Sadaqaat*

Payments for fulfilment of certain obligation out of our income, such as out of a wage, a dividend, a bill, etc. Sometimes *sadaqaat* is also used as a charity.

12.3.iii *Zakat*

Payments by way of investment, for the sake of economic development which essentially aims at making economic gains for the benefit of the society.

12.3.iv Business dealing and trading.

12.3.i Charity

Once the Qur'anic social order is established the need for charity should disappear. However, during the transitional period, there will always be the need for charity, but Allah likes the affluent people to pay the charity voluntarily, and by way of expressing gratitude to their Creator. The following verses explain the concept of charity in a God-fearing society:

> **(2:177)** [...]And giveth his wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask and to set slaves free.
>
> **(76:8)** And feed with food the needy wretch, the orphan and the prisoner, for love of Him.

> **(76:9)** (Saying): We feed you, for the sake of Allah only. We wish for no reward nor thanks from you.

A selfless act to help the needy breeds two obvious elements in the society: firstly, the needy are helped in material terms which generates a feeling of cohesion in the society, and secondly, the donor gains a spiritual benefit in that his desire for material effects gets blunted which diverts him from obstructing the path of the society. Indeed, it causes a reversal in the direction of people's greed when they come forward to give in charity as a matter of free will, and as an expression of their gratitude to the Creator.

12.3.ii *Sadaqaat*

Please see the following verses to understand this concept.

> **(9:60)** The *sadaqaat* are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and (for) the wayfarer; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise.

> **(9:103)** Take alms of their wealth (*sadaqaat*), wherewith thou mayest purify them and mayest make them grow, and pray for them. Lo! Thy prayer is an assuagement for them. Allah is Hearer, Knower.

The scheme is simple to understand provided human beings believe that it is on account of the resources made available by the Creator that the material gains are forthcoming in the first place, and a share out of such gains belongs to Allah, and that this share is to be spent for the general welfare of the society. As such, the payment as *sadaqaat* in verses 9:60 and 9:103 has been termed as 'for the cause of Allah'. In simple terms *sadaqaat* means the tax paid by the people and businesses of the state which must then be used for welfare spending. It must be noted that, like many Arabic words having multiple meanings, *sadaqaat* can also have other meanings including 'charity', and the meaning applicable in a particular case depends on the context in which it is used.

> **(57:18)** Lo! Those who give *sadaqaat*, both men and women, and lend unto Allah a goodly loan, it will be doubled for them, and theirs will be a rich reward.

Verse 6:141 below explains when this Divine-share is supposed to be paid: on the day of harvesting. In today's terms, it would mean the taxes that one must pay when one receives his pay.

> **(6:141)** He it is Who produceth gardens trellised and untrellised, and the date-palm, and crops of divers flavour, and the olive and the pomegranate, like and unlike. Eat ye of the fruit thereof when it fruiteth, and pay the due thereof upon the harvest day, and be not prodigal. Lo! Allah loveth not the prodigals.

This Payment for Allah is a payment to the Islamic State for the common welfare. By the same token payments to the Messenger in verses 58:12,13 means payments to the State for the general welfare (as the Messenger was then the collector on behalf of the State).

> **(58: 12)** O ye who believe! When ye hold conference with the Messenger, offer *sadaqaat* before your conference. That is better and purer for you. But if ye cannot find (the wherewithal) then lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
>
> **(58:13)** Fear ye to offer *sadaqaat* before your conference? Then when ye do it not and Allah hath forgiven you, establish worship and invest in *Zakat* and obey Allah and His messenger. And Allah is Aware of what ye do.

It is important to note that Allah enjoins on Muslim men to consider marriage payment to their wives as a duty (4:24), and this payment has been named as *sadaqaat* (4:4). In this case *sadaqaat* is not a charity but an obligation which must be paid.

> **(4:24)** [...]And those of whom ye seek consent (by marrying them), give unto them their portions **as duty**. And there is no sin for you in what ye do by mutual agreement after the duty (hath been done). Lo! Allah is ever Knowing, Wise.
>
> **(4:4)** And give unto the women (whom ye marry) free gift of their marriage portions (***sadaqaat***); but if they of their own accord remit unto you a part

> thereof, then ye are welcome to absorb it (in your wealth).

Mankind must understand the cardinal principle that a peaceful and a stable society will only come into being when there prevails a just socio-economic system. In such a system, wealth is like blood for the human body: blood must continuously circulate throughout the body, and must reach each and every cell of the body. Only then will the body continue to stay healthy. The hoarding of wealth is like thrombosis: an economic system will collapse if hoarding is allowed to permeate society. This is why Allah forbids hoarding of wealth as the following verses show.

> **(9:34)** [...]Those who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom.

> **(104:1-4)** Woe unto every greedy, arrogant, one who hath gathered wealth (of this world) and arranged it. He thinketh that his wealth will render him immortal. Nay, but verily he will be flung into the Consuming One.

In a truly Islamic state there will be security for everybody, and hence any surplus wealth will be invested, thus avoiding the effect of hoarding. Also, Allah lays great stress upon the distribution of wealth of a deceased person, and the Qur'an contains extremely detailed laws of inheritance. This is a vital scheme whereby the wealth of the nation stays well distributed, and the formation of cartels is not possible. Unfortunately, Muslims devised ways and means to circumvent these vital economic measures by defining *sadaqaat* as voluntary charity and

limiting *Zakat* to 2.5% of savings and accumulated assets so that the rich could hold on to their wealth. In contrast, the woman's dowry (i.e. the marriage payment from their husband) in most cases remain an unclaimed contract, whereas it should be invested for the woman, as the maintenance of a family is the responsibility of the man. Further, women are often deprived of their inheritance from their parents' side, in spite of the Qur'an's clear injunction on this.

12.3.iii *Zakat*

Literally, *zakat* means growth, purification and righteousness. Al-Shaukani gives the following definition: 'Linguistically, *zakah* means growth: One says *Zakahhaz-Zar* meaning the plant grew. It can also mean purification. In *Shariah* (Islamic law) it implies both meanings. The first meaning is construed as to cause growth in wealth, or as to cause more reward or as to pertain to increasing wealth, such as the case in commerce and agriculture.' [4]

> **(30:39)**The usury that is practised to increase some people's wealth, does not gain anything with Allah. But if you invest in *zakat*, seeking Allah's countenance, these are the ones who receive their reward manifold.

Both *zakat* and usury involve the investment of capital in order to seek material gains. But whereas *zakat* is a method of investment approved by Allah, usury is condemned. The above verse indicates the cardinal principle that the material gains resulting from the practice of usury gain nothing with Allah, whereas the gains, resulting from the practice of *zakat*, receive 'Allah's

blessing'. Instead of following the straight interpretation, the Traditionalists went in the direction of linking *zakat* with verses 9:60 and 9:103 which are related to *sadaqaat*, and extracted an interpretation which led to charity collections being introduced by the State. They went so far as to fix the yardsticks for such charity collections, and to attribute the emergence of this practice to the Messenger of Allah. It is unimaginable that the Messenger of Allah would have introduced an economic system, whereby extracting 2.5% of the otherwise ill-gotten wealth would render it 'pure'! After having demonstrated that *zakat* is something different from what had been ordained in verses 9:60 and 9:103, we come to verse 2:177 which indicates that even after spending in charity, out of own volition, there is something called '*zakat*' which will still be outstanding. Verse 22:41 ordains that the true believers are those who, when allowed power and influence, establish a system of '*zakat*' in their way of life.

> **(22:41)** Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and invest in *zakat* and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity. And Allah's is the sequel of events.

Verse 22:78 further confirms this Ordinance.

> **(22:78)** [...]So establish worship, invest in *zakat*, and hold fast to Allah. He is your protecting Friend. A blessed Patron and a blessed Helper !

Here is a list of references which deal with *zakat* directly: 2:43,83,110,177,277; 4:162; 5:12; 7:156; 9:5,11,18,71; 21:73; 22:41,78; 24:37,56; 27:3; 31:4; 33:33; 41:7.

***Zakat* prevents hoarding of money and causes the wealth to grow so that people can earn their living instead of depending on charity**. Another way of looking at *zakat* is that if the spare cash is simply given away in charity then, in the long run, the person may not be able to give in charity but may himself become dependant on charity, due to his circumstances changing. However, if *zakat* is used as an investment for growth then one can still live a modest life, and help the society in creating employment, so that the people do not need to depend on charity. At the same time the question of hoarding is removed. *Zakat* as an investment therefore fulfils many of the Qur'anic requirements.

Note: There are verses in the Qur'an in which the word '***sabeelillah***' appears. For example:

> **(2:261)** The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah's way (*sabeelillah*) is as the likeness of a grain which groweth seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold to whom He will. Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.
>
> **(4:160-161)** Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews We forbade them good things which were (before) made lawful unto them, and because of their much hindering from Allah's way (*sabeelillah*). And of their taking usury when they were forbidden it, and of their devouring people's wealth by false pretences. We have prepared for those of them who disbelieve a painful doom.

> **(47:38)** Lo! Ye are those who are called to spend in the way of Allah (*sabeelillah*), yet among you there are some who hoard. And as for him who hoardeth, he hoardeth only for his soul. And Allah is Rich and ye are poor. And if ye turn away He will exchange you for some other folk, and they will not be the likes of you.

The literal meaning of *sabeelillah* is 'Allah's Path'. Traditionalists consider this synonymous with charity, even though in the whole of the Qur'an this word has never been used in that meaning. Effectively, it means spending freely: money, time, wealth or anything, in the path of Allah.

12.3.iv Business dealings (*baiy*) and trading (*tejarat*)

Business dealings and trading are two different practices as indicated in the following verses:

> **(24:37)** Such people as remember Allah while trading or making *baiy*[...]

The nearest concept of *baiy* in this verse is business dealing which pertains to the dealings with money where the exchange of commodity is not involved. Outwardly, it would look similar to the practice of usury. However, it has a subtle and vital difference. When we understand this, the wording of following verse becomes clear.

> **(2:275)** [...]They say *baiy* is just like usury: whereas Allah permitteth *baiy* and forbiddeth usury[...]

As an example, a model of money lending based on *baiy* would be that profits and losses would be shared equitably. Alternatively, to repay the loan in such a way that it retained its original purchasing power. There could be no question of repaying in devalued money. In contrast, money lending based on usury, where money is lent at an agreed rate of interest, would be independent of whether the borrower makes a profit or loss out of the money lent.

Verse 2:282 below clarifies *baiy* as essentially a practice of mutual agreement designed to last over a period of time, which therefore, must be signed and witnessed. Trading on the other hand may be long term or across the table, where a commodity is exchanged for money. It excludes the practice of money dealing, without involvement of commodities.

> **(2:282)** O ye who believe! When ye contract a debt for a fixed term, record it in writing[...] And call to witness, from among your men, two witnesses[...]

12.4 Qur'anic scheme of economics summarised[5]

1. Free enterprise and right to personal holdings but in a rightful way.

2. Lending or borrowing of money on fixed interest is forbidden. Usury in any form is not allowed.

3. Usury to be replaced by *zakat*. Money to be invested freely, either directly or through the intermediaries known as *Bait-ul-Mals* (banks); and to share profits and losses of

the institution where money is lent. Other clerical services like transfers, letter of credit, licensing should be performed on the tariff to be approved by the government.

4. Individuals pay in charity in the manner ordained in the Qur'an (see 12.3.i), and must maintain the institution of free will and a free sum of money: the Qur'an has a depth of insight not to fix a precise percentage. It should be different from person to person and from time to time, the principle aim being the process of reversal of greed.

5. The State would take by way of taxes from the society with the primary intention of removing excess and redistributing wealth for general welfare (see 12.3.ii).

6. No one should be able to sell something he hadn't already bought or paid for. It would not be possible to speculate in 'futures' as is done in the West, that is, without ever actually owning the goods. The fortunes men make in the City of London by financial transactions which would be strictly forbidden by Islamic Law.

7. Fresh money would only come into circulation when goods and services of the corresponding value had been inducted into the society. This would effectively check price spirals, inflation, collapse of currencies, etc. Distribution of fresh money coming into circulation would be on mutually-agreed basis between the society members.

9. An air of confidence would emerge so that people would come forward willingly, and make investments (see 12.3.iii).

An economic system based on the Qur'anic principles of an equitable society and productive investment can effectively remove much of the chronic economic illnesses as suffered by the modern society.

References:

1. *Freedom for Qur'an* by Ahmad Nawaz and published by Ahmad Nawaz. Mr. Nawaz has dedicated his book for the service of mankind and as such there is no copyright restriction. The basic concepts are based on this book.
2. *Islam: Taking root in Europe* by Sahib Mustaqim Bleher. Published by 'Islamic Party of Britain' in their official Party News report, 'Common Sense' dated Last Quarter 1992.Issue number 8. p. 10, 11.
3. *The Guardian*: (i) News item on front page dated 7.3.87.
(ii) Passages from the article *Impossible Debt on Road to Global Ruin* by F. Clairmonte and J. Cavanagh, dated 9.1.87.
4. *Zakah* by Abdul Rehman Ansari.
Published by IPCI, 481 Coventry Road, Small Heath, Birmingham B10 0JS. p. 5.
5. *Freedom for Qur'an* by Ahmad Nawaz and published by Ahmad Nawaz. p. 167-169.

13. LAW-MAKING IN ISLAM

13.1 Introduction

The sources of Islamic jurisprudence are of two kinds. The first is drawn directly from the primary sources of the Qur'an and the Traditions. The other is secondary and includes *ijma* or unanimous agreement of jurists by analogy drawn from precedent. To this may be added the source of equity and custom which was the basis of the Hanafi and the Maliki schools. The study of these sources was the subject of a special science called *Ilm Al-Usul*. It gave rise to what is called *ijtihad*, i.e. the effort or endeavour to interpret legal sources and to discover proper solutions for religious and legal cases. *Ijtihad* was thus an important factor in Islamic legal history, in adapting rules to the need of civilisation, and was one of the causes of the florescence of Islamic jurisprudence in the Abbasside period. But after the fall of Baghdad in the 13th century, Islamic civilisation began to fade, and orthodox or *Sunni* jurists agreed that the four well-known *Sunni* schools, i.e. the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali were sufficient. They thus agreed upon the closing of the door of *ijtihad*. As a result, new interpretations were prohibited, and consequently unconsidered and slavish imitation (*taqlid*) became general. [1]

The above four groups i.e. the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali can be classed together as *Ahle-fiqh*. A later development of another *Sunni* group is the *Ahle-hadith*. The Shias similarly had developed into separate sects i.e. Kais'ania, Zaidia, Im'amia, Ism'ailia and, lastly, Ghali (now extinct).

13.2 The development of jurisprudence (*ahle-fiqh*)

The books dealing with law-making (*fiqh*) were written before there was any such literature called Ahadith (plural of Hadith). The cause of this was plain. Law and the treatises of law were a necessity for the public and thus were encouraged by the State. The study of traditions was on the other hand less essential and was more of a personal and private nature.[2]

Malik ibn-Anas (d.179 A.H.) was a forerunner of the four *Sunni* schools of law. Malik was a lawyer who gathered traditions not for their own sake but to use them in law. Abu Hanifa (d.150 A.H.) who died earlier than Malik, was more interested in developing theoretical principles which could be used as a basis for the development of law. He relied little upon tradition and preferred to take the Qur'anic texts and develop them in detail. It was two of his immediate pupils, Quadi Abu Yusuf (d. A.H. 182) and Muhammad Ibn-Hasan (d. A.H. 189), who converted his theoretical principles into codes of law. The third school is that of Al-Shafi (d. A.H. 204). His system was based on four sources: the Qur'an, Traditions, analogy and 'agreement'. All the schools have practically accepted Al-Shafi's classification of the sources for legitimate thought. The last of the four schools is that of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. A.H. 241). He was a theologian and made no claim as a lawyer. His *masnad* is an immense collection of 30,000 *hadiths*. These were not arranged for legal purposes. He suffered terribly for his orthodox faith under the Khalifa Mamun. After his death his disciples drew together and established the fourth school. His school reduced the influence of agreement and analogy and tended towards literal interpretation.

13.3 Influence of the Hadiths as a source of law (*ahle-hadith*)

The four schools of thought (law) as discussed in section 13.2 are generally classed together as *Ahle-Fiqh*. In Muslim eyes they are all equally valid and their decisions equally sacred. The believer may belong to any one of these, but he must choose one. The liberty of variety in unity is again due to agreement. However, the conflict in the application of the law between the followers of the various schools has also caused sectarian division among the Sunnis. The Hanafi school has the largest following. The next in order of size of following are the Shafi and the Maliki schools while the smallest is the Hanbali school which is followed by the Wahabite state of Saudi Arabia.

There is another school of thought, commonly called the Traditionalists (*Ahle-Hadith*). They maintain that it is not *Fiqh* but the 'sayings' of the Prophet which should be enforced as they are, since they supposedly contain fundamental and unchangeable law. This school holds that after scrutiny, Hadith occupies the same position and authority as the Qur'an, and a denial of Hadith affects one's faith and honesty in the same manner as the denial of the Qur'an itself will do – i.e. beyond the pale of Islam.[3] They also believe:

> In our view Hadith is revealed and whatever it says was conveyed to *Rasoolullah* in the same way as the Holy Qur'an. The (angel) Gabriel[A1] came with the Holy Qur'an as well as the *Sunnah* and conveyed *Sunnah* to *Rasoolullah* in the manner he conveyed to him the Holy Qur'an. We do not approve of discrimination in Revelations

> and hold both the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah* in concurrent authority.[4]

In regard to the two anthologies Bukhari and Muslim, the school holds that: 'By consensus of opinion Muslims acknowledge that the agreed *hadiths* in the two anthologies are valid and their veracity absolute.'[5]

The above view is not shared by all those who consider Hadith the basis of Islamic Law (*Shariat*), as would appear from the following comment by Maudoodi: 'Ahadith has come down through a chain of narrators, one person passing information verbally to another. By its very nature the process can at best be viewed as conveying probability and not certainty. It is unthinkable that Allah would leave believers in the matter of faith in a position in which they should determine their course of action on the basis of material passed on by word of mouth.' He goes on to say: 'The material may be useful as a help in ascertaining the practice of *Rasoolullah* and the doings of his companions, but it is not a thing which could claim complete reliance. The claim that the text of all the Ahadith in Bukhari should be accepted without critical appreciation is untenable'. [6]

13.4 The legal system of the Shi'ites[7]

Among the *Shi'ites* the true legal authority lies with the doctors of religion and law called *Mujtahids*. They seem to have in their hands the teaching power which strictly belongs to the Hidden Imam (see below). They thus represent the principle authority which is the governing concept of the *Shia*. The *Shi'ites* also utterly reject the

idea of the various *Sunni* schools of law, and the idea of unity in diversity.

The *Shia* sect originated from Hazrat Ali, purely for political reasons. There were people who believed that Hazrat Ali should have been the rightful *Khalifa* after the death of the Prophet because he was the son-in-law of the Prophet. Like the *Sunnis* the *Shias* are also divided into five groups, of which one group, called the *Ghali*, is now extinct. The main sect - the *Imamia* sect - has 12 Imams. The *Shias* regard the Imams as the representative of Allah. The Imams are therefore infallible. Laws are then developed depending on what the Imam says. Their main sect, as well as the sub-sects, start from Hazrat Ali. Incidentally, Hazrat Ali is also highly regarded by the *Sunni* Muslims as he was the fourth *Caliph*. The last Imam of the *Imamia* sect (the12th Imam) disappeared without trace from a cave. The *Shias* say that Allah has concealed him, and sometime later, when the time is right, he will reappear to save the world. That is the philosophy behind the disappearance of the Imam. As far as the other sub-sects are concerned, they originate from the main sect, which does not agree with this line. One sub-sect is from Hazrat Ali's other wife Hanfia who gave birth to a son named Muhammad bin Hanfia. The people who follow him are a sub-sect called *Kais'ania*, but here again his followers believe that in spite of his death he is going to come back to make sure that everything is put right. At present, he is supposedly being kept concealed by Allah. There is another sub-sect which is called the *Zaidia*. They believe up to the fourth Imam (Imam Jainal Abedeen) and after him they follow Imam Zaid. Finally, there is the *Ism'ailia* sub-sect. They are a small community, but very wealthy. They follow up to the 6th Imam (Imam Jafar

Sadiq), and thereafter Imam Ismail. They are very secretive, but recently a member of that that group published a book revealing some of their activities. The *Shias*, as such, do not believe in the *Sunni* Schools of Laws.

13.5 The Qur'an as a source of law

Parwez makes a poignant observation:

> In Islam obedience is essentially and basically due only to the Laws of Allah as embodied in the Qur'an. 'Shall I (*Rasoolullah*) seek other than Allah for judge, when He it is who hath revealed unto you (this) scripture, fully explained[...?]' **(6:114)**. '[...] whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed: such are wrong-doers' **(5:45)**.[8]

Obedience to Divine Laws is not a thing belonging to the individual person in the sense that one might, of his own, consult the Qur'an, interpret it for himself and act according to his individual interpretation. The obedience has to be disciplined and orderly under an organised system (called 'State' in present-day terminology) controlled by a central authority, the first central authority being Allah's *Rasool*. (4:80) 'Whoso obeyeth the messenger, obeyeth Allah, and whoso turneth away: We have not sent thee as a warder over them'. (5:49) '[...]so judge between them by that which Allah hath revealed, and follow not the desires away from the truth which hath come unto thee[...]'

Baring a few exceptions, the Qur'an enunciates generally fundamental principles without touching on subsidiary laws. About these fundamental principles or permanent values the Qur'an says: **(6:115) The basic principle revealed by the Nourisher has been made complete in truth and justice. There is none who can change His principles**[...][9].

The question as to how subsidiary laws which have deliberately been left undetermined in the Qur'an, will be formulated in the light of the permanent values, is answered by the direction given in the Qur'an to the Prophet -- to **(3:159)** '[...]**consult them (the believers) in the affairs of (the society)**[...][10]

While he lived, the Prophet determined subsidiary laws in consultation with the *Ummat*. The question is as to what was to be done after his demise. The Qur'an answers the question by saying: (3:144) 'Muhammad is but a messenger, messengers (the like of whom) have passed away before him. Will it be that, when he dieth or is slain ye will turn back on your heels[..?]' It follows that the process of framing laws within the framework of Qur'anic principles, was not to discontinue after the death of the Prophet [...][11]. Had the institution of *Khilafat* on the pattern set by the Prophet continued, the process of legislation evolved by it would have continued to develop normally, making the law of *Shariat* a happy blending of permanence and change. It is a pity that the process came to a halt and with it

ended the critical attitude with which subsidiary laws used to be formulated. It is true that for a time the various schools of *Fiqh* carried on the process, but theirs was an effort on the individual plane which very soon became rigid and fossilised.[12]

The all-important question confronting us now is that since the *Khilafat* on the pattern of our Prophet has long ceased to exist, what lines an Islamic State should follow for legislation. If the answer is that if a *Khilafat* in the pattern of the Prophet is impossible since personalities like Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Omar are no longer available to do the job then it would be tantamount to admitting that the Qur'an offered a code of life for a particular period of history only. This would be preposterous. **The Qur'an has been preserved by Allah so as to provide mankind with a code for practical living from age to age and from place to place**. On the basis of Qur'anic principles an organisation (Islamic State) was set up once. A similar organisation can be set up again *now*. But a change-over from the present to an ideal Islamic State cannot be brought about overnight. The organisation will, by stages, proceed towards its ultimate goal by normal process of evolution, ridding itself of initial short-comings at every step[13].

It must be borne in mind that the right to introduce changes belongs to the Islamic State and not to individuals whatever their mental development may be. Individuals can only initiate changes in the thought

process but the effective action depends on the co-operation of whole society.

Mashriqi sums up the question well: '[...]the later exponents of Islam failed altogether to emphasise is that the jurists have taken up only that portion of the law from the Qur'an which has technical punishments or technical explanations attached to it, and have put no emphasis on various other crimes and sins which the Qur'an emphasises as having led nations to ultimate destruction, and concerning which the Qur'an emphatically says that their punishment is eternal Hell.' [14]

Proper *fiqh*, taken from the pages of the Qur'an and put into actual practice by the force of the belief of those who run Islamic society politically, is the main remedy for reviving Islam. Unless this is done under the auspices of those who read the Qur'an in its original spirit and know as well the practical administration of law in human society, Islamic *fiqh* cannot produce miraculous results. As a start, the Islamic Administrators of Law should take up those commandments of the Qur'an which will tend to construct the whole society on solid foundations. In this respect the Qur'anic dictum (3:104) that 'there should be people among you who invite (people) to do good and order you to do the outstanding good (of remaining united) and prohibit you from doing the outstanding evil (of becoming dispersed into various sections)[...]', must be a portion of our progressive law[15]. The well-known Qur'anic verses: (3:103) 'and hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate[...]', and (6:160) 'Those people who split up their programme (*deen*) and become divided into several sections, thou (Oh Prophet) art not to include thyself in them in any respect

[...]', are some examples of the way in which the Qur'an enjoins on its followers to keep the commandments of Allah under all circumstances, and unless mandates of a general nature like these, are put into practice by the moral force of law and judicious legislation, no law of humans can organise a healthy society. It is thus the duty of the progressive Islamic *fiqh* to extend its domain of moulding the morals and actions of Muslims in such a way that the whole spirit of the law contained in the Qur'an is maintained. [16]

13.6 Application of *Shariat* laws in modern times

The point that must be emphasised is that the modern *Shariat* laws are basically laws derived from the Hadith literature. The Qur'an has very little part to play in it. In fact, the laws made with reference to the Qur'an, in some cases, are used without proper research of the Arabic text or the context in which they are used. A good example is the punishment for theft (see section 8.1). The law used in other cases, such as the stoning to death for adultery, has its origin in the Hadiths and has nothing to do with the Qur'an (see section 10.3 selection no.1). The sad irony is that many people, including the Talibans in Afghanistan, think that this law comes from the Qur'an. In reality, the Talibans are totally ignorant of the Qur'an and their teaching comes from the Hadiths, and this is why they practice such a barbarous law.

In practice, the effect of a law can be judged by its application. For instance, Sudan has applied their interpretation of *Shariat* laws and failed. Pakistan is another example where so-called *Shariat* laws were imposed under army rule. Its political turmoil clearly

shows that it too has failed. Saudi Arabia, which is ruled by an autocratic kingship, maintains its grip by a strict interpretation and application of the *Shariat* laws for its ordinary people, while its vast riches are enjoyed by only a handful of people who squander a lot of their wealth in many un-Islamic activities abroad. We have already stated that the *Shariat* law of the Saudis is based on the Hanbali School and as such the importance of the Qur'an in its legal system is minimal. Some of the other Muslim states have found that it is almost impossible to apply what they percieve to be *Shariat* Laws under the present conditions. They have therefore adopted a number of Western codes of law (civil code and criminal code) along with some 'Islamic' law. It is not difficult to see that the *Shariat* law, because of its antiquated and extremely rigid nature, cannot be applied in the present situation with any degree of success. One aspect of such a *Shariat* is the conflict it creates between the various schools of law when judging cases involving people belonging to these different schools. The jurists are swift to gloss this over by saying that one can belong to any of these schools and still be a Muslim. The fact remains that it has created the very sectarian division of Islam which is strictly forbidden in the Qur'an, as already indicated. The only way to overcome these problems is to base the *Shariat* laws on the Fundamental Principles of the Qur'an.

This cannot be fully achieved without a true Islamic State. And in the formulation of such laws we should always consider the Qur'anic Principles of fairness and justice first and foremost, if we are to hope to produce a society which is both morally strong and beneficial to those who live in it.

References:

1. *Modernisation of Legal System in Muslim Countries*, summary of an introductory address included in ref: no. 9, by Dr. Sobhi Mahmassani. p. 7.
2.*Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* by Duncan B. Macdonald. p. 77, second paragraph. Published by Premier Book House, 4/5 Katchery Road, Lahore, Pakistan. p. 77.
3. *The Principles of Law-making in Islam*, by G.A. Parwez. Meezan Publications: 27-B Shahalam Market, Lahore, Pakistan. p. 54.
4. Ibid., p. 54, 55.
5. Ibid., p. 55.
6. Ibid,. p. 55, 56.
7. *Conspiracies against the Qur'an*, by Dr. S.A. Wadud. Khalid Publishers, P.O. Box 4190, Lahore - 54600, Pakistan
8. The Principles of Law-making in Islam, by G.A. Parwez. Meezan Publications: 27-B Shahalam Market, Lahore, Pakistan. p.61.
9. Ibid,. p. 62, 63.
10. Ibid,. p. 63.
11. Ibid,. p. 66.
12. Ibid,. p. 77.
13. Ibid,.77-79.
14. *Quranic System of Law*, by Allama Enayatullah Mashriqi. Akhuwat Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. p. 10.
15. Ibid,. p.12.
16. Ibid,. p.12,13.

14. THE QUR'AN AND SCIENCE

To get an understanding of the science in the Qur'an we refer the reader to the excellent book *The Bible, The Qur'an, and Science* by Dr. Maurice Bucaille, a respected French surgeon who conducted an investigation into this subject. Space permits us to quote only a few passages from his book and present a brief outline of the subjects covered in the book. However, this book is a must for anyone interested in a serious study of the topic of revealed scripture and modern science.

In discussing science with respect to the scriptures one must be careful to distinguish between scientific data of definitely established facts and explanatory theories which may be discarded with the march of scientific progress. What Dr. Bucaille discusses are incontrovertible facts which are firmly established. Thus, even if science as yet provides incomplete data as far as the full picture is concern, the general facts are sufficiently well-established to be referred to without fear of future contradiction. For example, it is well known that the Earth revolves round the Sun, and the Moon around the Earth. Our understanding of this fact is most unlikely to change dramatically. What may happen in future is that the orbit may be defined more clearly, or some other subtleties become more clearly defined.

Let us now quote a few passages from his book:

> The Qur'an follows on from the two Revelations that preceded it and is not only free from contradictions in its narrations, the sign of various

human manipulations to be found in the Gospels, but provides a quality all of its own for those who examine it objectively and in the light of science i.e. its complete agreement with modern scientific data. What is more, statements are to be found in it that are connected with science: yet it is unthinkable that a man of Muhammad's time could have been the author of them. Modern scientific knowledge therefore allows us to understand certain verses of the Qur'an which, until now, it has been impossible to interpret.[1]

It is easy to see therefore how for centuries commentators of the Qur'an (including those writing at the height of Islamic culture) have inevitably made errors of interpretation in the case of certain verses whose exact meaning could not possibly have been grasped. It was not until much later, at a period not far from our own, that it was possible to translate and interpret them correctly. This implies that a thorough linguistic knowledge is not in itself sufficient to understand these verses from the Qur'an. What is needed along with this is a highly diversified knowledge of science. A study such as the present one embraces many disciplines and is encyclopedic. As the questions raised are discussed, the variety of scientific knowledge essential to the understanding of certain verses of the Qur'an will become clear.

The Qur'an is not, however, a book that has the object of explaining certain laws governing the universe; it has an absolutely religious objective.

> The descriptions of Divine Omnipotence are what principally incite man to reflect on the works of creation. They are accompanied by references to facts accessible to human observation or to laws defined by God who presides over the organization of the universe both in the sciences of nature and as regards man. One part of these assertions is easily understood, but the meaning of the other can only be grasped if one has the essential scientific knowledge it requires. This means that in former times, man could only distinguish an apparent meaning which led him to draw the wrong conclusions on account of the inadequacy of his knowledge at the time in question.[2]

Given below are some of the scientific topics which are covered in the Qur'an the details of which are to be found in pages 139 to 220 of Dr. Bucaille's book. His book also compares the Biblical narrations of the Flood and the Exodus with the narration given in the Qur'an, with particular reference to those differences that make one description scientifically acceptable in the present day, and the other unacceptable.

- The creation of the Heavens and the Earth
- Astronomy
- The Earth
- The Animal and Vegetable Kingdoms
- Human Reproduction

To conclude: A conflict between science and religion is not found in the Qur'an; however, for a truly clear understanding of the scientific concepts used in the Qur'an, we need both scientific and linguistic knowledge.

References:

1. *The Bible The Qur'an and Science*, by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris. p. 268.
2. Ibid,. p. 129, 130.

15. THE PURPOSE OF MANKIND [1,2]

To understand the purpose of mankind we need to understand the role of human beings both at the individual level - *nafs* - and the collective level - *unfus* - as well as the level of the external world - *af'aque* - since the Qur'an is very clear on these issues. The underlying purpose of all three identities i.e. the *nafs*, the *unfus* and the *af'aque*, is to return to Allah. It is of utmost importance that there will be a return.

15.1 At the individual level: *nafs* (*noon-fe-seen*)

The Qur'an uses this word 255 times. The purpose of mankind at the individual level i.e. at the level of the *nafs* is self-development. What is *nafs*? This concept can neither be percieved nor explained empirically as it is not material, however, it is intrinsically bound up with the notion of Self. In the Qur'an it is referred to as *roohona* or 'divine energy'. Every human action - even thoughts - affects it, either providing growth and development to the self (*nafs*) or causing its disintegration.

> **(6:164)** [...]every *nafs* shall bear the consequences of its actions and no one can help him in any capacity[...]

When *nafs* is used to promote the higher values of humanity according to the divine laws it becomes positive/good receiving nourishment as it does so, but when it is used for selfish ends, it becomes negative, which the Qur'an terms as *hawa*: the source of cunning.

For further explanation see verses: 10:108; 17:7-15; 29:6; 30:44; 31:12; 35:18; 39:7,41; 41:46; 45:15 and 53:38.

15.2 At the collective level: *unfus*

Unfus is the plural of *nafs*. The purpose of mankind at the collective level i.e. the level of the *unfus* is the consolidation of human beings into a single entity (*umut ul wahada*). This requires the establishment of the Islamic State in which mankind will be able to establish Allah's laws, their *deen*, that is, a comprehensive way of life beneficial to all of mankind. Some details on the concept of *deen* were given earlier in chapter 2.

15.3 The external world: *af'aque*

The Qur'an in many of its verses encourages mankind to study nature as it holds secrets which are beneficial to mankind and which can only be brought to light through research. Nature is the Book of Allah, and the Qur'an an extract of that Book, which, if we were able to implement in real life, would enable us to unlock the secrets of Nature for the benefit of mankind. The following verse is one of many which should lead us to study and understand nature.

> **(45:13)** And He has made subservient to you, from Himself, all that is in the Heavens and the Earth: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think!

15.4 Return to Allah

This fact is specified in many verses, and though often passed over lightly, this is the final destination and ultimate purpose of Man. There follow a few examples of the many reminders of this fact in the Qur'an:

> **(53:42)** To your *Rabb* is the final goal.
>
> **(18:110)** [...]Whoever expects to meet his *Rabb*, let him perform righteous actions, and in the subservience of his Sustainer, his *Rabb*, make no one as partner.
>
> **(2:45,46)** Seek help in patience and *salat*, and truly it is hard, save for the humble-minded, who know that they will have to meet their *Rabb*, and unto Him they are returning.
>
> **(29:23)** Those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah and in their meeting with Him, such have no hope of My *Rahmat*. For such there is a painful doom.

Further evidence is given in 2:223,249; 3:28; 5:18,48; 6:154; 11:29; 12:20; 24:42; 25:15; 31:14; 40:3; 41:54; 50:43; 53:42; 56:60 and 64:3.

In this connection we would like to mention the thinking of Allama Mashriqi as quoted by Shabbir Hussain.[3]

> The human species, he argued, is governed by the laws different from what appears feasible in the case of other animal species and vegetation. **The law of survival and destruction of human societies concerns the science of religions,**

which was specially revealed to Man by the Creator through His chosen messengers. Allama's main aim was to bring mankind together on the basis of unity of this science and its purposes, just as the scientist enforces unity of concept when he upholds physical realities. He propounded a far higher purpose of Man's creation than has ever been conceived by any evolutionist or physicist. He held that Man was created to conquer the universe; the universe was created to be available to Man; to enrich him, to educate and train him how to utilise and recreate it. He declared that Man's present form was not his final form; Man's further evolution was inevitable for enabling him to inhabit every nook and cranny of the universe, to make him imperishable. This, he stated, was enunciated in the Qur'an and writ large on the face of the universe as the sole purpose of Man's creation. He demonstrated the deep harmony between the purposes of physical sciences and the science of religions, described divine revelation as the highest form of science, and explained the inevitability of adopting both sciences for the fulfilment of man's assignment -- the conquest of the universe.

References:

1. *Exposition of the Qur'an*, by Gulam Ahmed Parwez. Tolu-E-Islam Trust (Regd) 25B Gulberg, Lahore-11, Pakistan. p. 55, 56.
2. *Islamic State – First Principles*: Lecture by Syed Mustafa Ali.
3. *Man's Destiny (Tazkira)*, by Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Al-Mashriqi. Translated and edited from Urdu by Shabbir Hussain.

Publisher: Mujahid Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. p. 13, 14.

16. THE ISLAMIC STATE[1]

> **(61:9)** He it is who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the concrete, constructive and purposeful way of life (*deen-il-haqq*) that he may cause it to prevail over other ways of life, however much those who ascribe partners to Allah are averse.

Islam is described as *deen-il-haqq*, but what does it mean? The Qur'an clarifies the word *haqq* by means of a similitude:

> **(13:17)** He sends water from the sky, and the brooks flow according to their respective measures and the flood bears along a swelling foam. And from the metals which they melt in the fire, seeking to cast ornaments and necessaries, arises a scum like unto it. Thus, Allah coins the similitude of the truth (***haqq***) and the false (***batil***). Then, as for the foam, it passes away as scum upon the banks, while that which is beneficial to mankind, it remains in the earth. Thus Allah coins the similitudes.

Hence, Islam – the *deen-il-haqq* – is the true way of life which is beneficial to mankind, that is, it is the way of life for which human beings are best suited.

> **(3:19)** Surely the way of life (***deen***) acceptable to Allah is Islam[...]

The role of **the Qur'an as the source of the *deen-il-haqq*** is clarified by the Qur'an itself:

> **(14:1)** *Alif. Lam. Ra.* (This is) a Scripture which We have revealed unto thee (Muhammad) that thereby thou mayest bring forth mankind from darkness into light by the permission of their Sustainer (*Rabb*), unto the path of the Mighty, the Owner of Praise.
>
> **(3:83)** Seek they other than the *Deen* of Allah when unto Him submits whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they will be returned?

The Qur'an informs us that no way of life other than the *deen-il-haqq* is acceptable to Allah:

> **(12:40)** Those whom you serve beside Him are but names which you have named, you and your fathers. Allah has revealed no sanction for them. The decision rests with Allah only, Who has commanded you that you serve none but Him. This is the right way of life (***deen***), but most men know not.
>
> **(3:85)** And whoso seeketh any way of life (***deen***) other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter.

Why? It is so, because all other ways of life are detrimental to mankind. The system of life which is *deen-il-haqq* will supersede all other systems:

> **(61:8)** Fain would they put out the light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will perfect His light, however much the disbelievers are averse.

It should be noted that, to be regarded as an Islamic State, the State must be founded on Allah's *Deen* or *Deen-il-haqq*. This will involve both ideological and practical principles.

Ideological transformation is necessary because:

> **(8:53)** [...]Allah never changes the condition of a nation until they first change what is within themselves[...]

> **(13:11)** [...]Allah never changes the condition of a people until they first change what is within themselves[...]

As thought needs action, so ideology will need **practical manifestation**. Note the following verses:

> **(29:2,3)** Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they say, 'We believe', and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We tested those who were before you. Thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere, and knoweth those who feign.

> **(3:142)** Or deemed ye that ye would enter Paradise while Allah knoweth not those of you who really strive, nor knoweth those (of you) who are steadfast?

> **(2:214)** Or think ye that ye will enter Paradise while yet there hath not come unto you the like of (that which came to) those who passed away before you? Affliction and adversity befell them, they were shaken as with earthquake, till the messenger (of Allah) and those who believed along with him said: When cometh Allah's help? Now surely Allah's help is nigh.

Thus, if people are really sincere and steadfast then success is bound to come with Allah's help. In fact, the guarantee of success is given by Allah Himself:

> **(24:55)** Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed in the earth as He caused those who were before them to succeed; and He will surely establish for them their *deen* which He hath approved for them: and that He will change their state, from the fear in which they lived, to one of security and peace.

> **(10:9)** Lo! Those who believe and do good works, their Sustainer guideth them by their faith[...]

> **(9:111)** Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for paradise[...]

However, there is also a warning:

> **(47:38)** [...] If you turn away, He will exchange you for some other people, and they will not be like you.

> **(10:13)** We destroyed the generations before you when they did wrong; and their messengers (from Allah) came unto them with clear proofs (of His Sovereignty) but they would not believe. Thus do we reward the guilty folk.

16.1 Outline of a constitution[2]

Every state, in order to function properly, needs a constitution which defines the structure and powers of the state and the rights and duties of its citizens. The constitution can be defined either in a written document or based on traditions and practices in accordance with which the government is organised. However, any constitution needs to be flexible in order to take account of the progress of the society.

As far as **the Islamic State** is concerned, the constitution must be based on Qur'anic principles and guidelines, and no part of the constitution should be contrary to the fundamental principles of the Qur'an. The constitution must be decided by the community through a process of consultation, and the manner in which this consultation should be carried out should also be decided by the community. The judiciary, which must be independent of the executive, should decide on matters where there is a violation of the constitution in private or public life.

We now outline the six main concepts upon which the constitution of an Islamic State must be based:

1. Sovereignty in an Islamic State belongs only to Allah. Subservience, therefore, is due to Allah alone.

(51:56) I created the jinn and the humankind only that they might serve Me.

(16:51) Allah has said, 'Take not for subservience two authorities; for He is One.'

(3:79) It is not permitted for any human being unto whom Allah has given the Book and wisdom and the Divine Message that he should afterwards have said unto mankind, 'Be subservient to me instead of Allah.'

2. The sovereignty in practice shall be that of the Qur'an, which means that the government shall be obedient to the laws based on the fundamental principles of the Qur'an.

(6:115) Perfected is the Word of thy Sustainer in truth and justice. There is nothing that can change His Words[...]

(5:44) [...]Those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are disbelievers.

(5:47) [...]Those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are wrong-doers.

(6:114) Shall I seek other than Allah for judge when it is He who has revealed unto you (this) Book, fully explained? [..]

(6:116) If you obeyed most of those on earth they would mislead you far from Allah's way. They follow nothing but an opinion, they do but guess.

(45:18) And We have set thee (O Muhammad) on a clear road of commandment; so follow it, and follow not the whims of those who know not.

3. The Islamic State has no place for any sectarian division. Thus, a truly Islamic state should declare that if anyone who calls himself a Muslim and at the same time calls himself *Sunni* or *Shia*, or specifies any sect with regard to his belief, then as far as the State is concerned he or she is a non-believer and shall be regarded in law as such. It does not, of course, follow that he or she will be punished on that basis since no one can be compelled to believe one way or the other.

(2:256) There is no compulsion in *deen*[...]

(6:159) Those who divide themselves into sects have nothing to do with you. Their case will go to Allah, Who then will tell them what they used to do.

(30:31,32) Turning unto Him (only); and be careful of your duty unto Him, and establish worship, and be not of those who ascribe partners (unto Him); like those who divide their *deen* into sects; each sect rejoicing with what they have done.

(3:103) And hold fast, all of you together, to the cable of Allah, and do not separate [...]

A true Islamic State was certainly formed during the time of the Prophet and the four Khalifs and lasted for about thirty years. It was then changed to kingship by later

Khalifs a course which, in effect, was one of the many causes of its demise.

In such a state believers not only do good but also exhort one another to truth and duty:

> **(103:3)** Save those who believe and do good works, and exhort one another to truth and exhort one another to endurance.
>
> **(5:2)** [...]but help ye one another unto righteousness and pious duty[...]
>
> **(3:104)** And there may spring from you a nation who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency. Such are they who are successful.

4. The Islamic State should be 'democracy by consultation' – allowing room for progress and flexibility. Indeed, the Qur'an warns against seeking the regulation of everything by Divine command. For instance, it gives no specifics about the form of government, rather, it leaves considerable room for the development of laws and practices as long as the Fundamental Principles are not violated.

(5:101) O ye who believe! Ask not of things which, if it were made known unto you, would trouble you; but if ye ask about them in the light of the Qur'an then they will become obvious to you. Allah has left them out, for Allah is Forgiving, Clement.

> **(42:38)** [...]Who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation[...]
>
> **(3:159)** [...]and consult them in the conduct of their affairs. And when thou art resolved, then put thy trust in Allah. Lo! Allah loveth those who put their trust (in Him)

The differences can be resolved by taking the Qur'an as the foundation of the Islamic State.

> **(2:213)** Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent messengers with glad tidings and warnings and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people and in matters wherein they differed. But the people of the Book, after clear signs came to them, did not differ among themselves, except through hatred of one another. Allah (by his grace) guided the believers to the truth, concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He wills, unto a straight path.
>
> **(42:10)** And in whatsoever ye differ, the verdict therein belongeth to Allah. Such is my Sustainer, in Whom I put my trust, and unto Whom I turn.

The Qur'an does not provide instructions as to the form of government in an Islamic State. In the initial stages it is to be based on what is best and beneficial for the people. The eventual aim is to remove all barriers of a nationalist state so that freedom of movement of the individual be unrestricted, the eventual aim being to unite mankind.

In the West the feeling that democracy works better in a multi-party system is in reality a myth, as the politics involved in getting into power are based on promises which are never fulfilled in practice, once the party who wins the election by making such promises comes to power. Morality has no place in today's politics. Justice favours only those who have the wealth and the power, whereas in a truly Islamic state any immoral or corrupt person would be weeded out, irrespective of his position in the party.

5. The decision-makers and the administrators of an Islamic State should possess high standard of conduct and character. The Qur'an specifies some good attributes about individuals belonging to a Muslim community: for example, *momineen*, *saliheen*, and *muttaqeen*.

(49:15) The believers *(momineen)* are those only who believe in Allah and His messenger and afterward doubt not, but strive with their wealth and their lives for the cause of Allah. Such are the sincere.

(29:9) And as for those who believe and do good works, We verily shall make them enter in among the righteous (*saliheen*).

(2:177) It is not righteousness that ye turn faces to the East and the West; but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and giveth his wealth, for the love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask, and to set slaves free; and observeth proper worship and invests

in *zakat*. And those who keep their treaty when they make one and are patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the Allah-fearing (*muttaqeen*).

(49:13) [...]the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous amongst you[...]

The Qur'an accepts the differences in personal qualities of Muslims on the basis of their commitment to the cause of Islam, but fundamental good qualities will be the pre-requisite for anyone to be entrusted with the running of an Islamic State. However, this in no way compromises one's right to equal treatment. Equality means that the privileges of wealth, birth, class, colour or race are abolished by law, and discrimination in any shape or form is strictly prohibited. Similarly, there should be absolutely no bars on non-Muslims participating in any public office or government service. The allocation of such posts should be according to the appropriate personal qualities.

6. Administration of justice: Justice is the key to the functioning of an Islamic State. The Qur'an contains strict standards of equality and administration of justice, the independence and integrity of judges, and the duty of witnesses to come forward to bear true witness without any favour or partiality. See section 13.5 and also the chapter *Islam and Human Rights* which follows this.

The verse below gives a comprehensive idea on the standards of justice:

> **(4:135)** O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer to both (than ye are). So follow not passion lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever informed of what ye do.

Justice has to be provided free of charge by the State irrespective of a person's position in society and the law should not make any distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. In fact, the non-Muslims in an Islamic State should have all the rights which the Qur'an declares as basic human rights, and their life, property, honour and places of worship must be protected.

References:

1. *Islamic State -- First Principles*: Notes from Lecture and an unpublished article, by Syed Mustafa Ali.
2. *Quranocracy*, by Dr S.A. Wadud.
Khalid Publishers P.O.Box 4109, Lahore - 54600, Pakistan.
summarised from p. 42-68.

17. ISLAM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

17.1 Introduction

On 10th December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, consisting of thirty articles, was designed to achieve – by teaching and education – a common standard for the rights and freedoms for all people and all nations.

The Declaration of Human rights does not have the force of law. Undoubtedly, real enforcement of human rights can only be achieved by each state through appropriate legislative process, enforced through an independent judiciary.

While it is necessary that our efforts should be directed towards securing such rights through executive, administrative, legislative and judicial processes, we must all, individually and collectively, strive continuously to fulfil the duties we owe to each other at the moral and spiritual levels.

For the Muslims, and indeed for all mankind, Islam seeks to achieve a society in which equity is fostered and iniquity eschewed in all spheres of life - individual, domestic, national and international.

17.2 Future Relationship between Islam and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On the question of Islam vis-à-vis the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we would like to quote a few paragraphs from *Islam and Human Rights* by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, President of the Seventeenth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and a Vice-President and a judge of the International Court of Justice at the Hague. His book attempts a comparative study of Islam and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The following passages are taken from pages 140-143 of his book, published in 1967.

> The Declaration concerns itself with only certain aspects of human life and human relationships and must perforce seek to achieve its ideals through legislative, administrative and judicial safeguards and action. It cannot avail itself of the means and methods necessary for achieving a more comprehensive and far-reaching revolution in the lives of individuals and peoples. The purely moral and spiritual aspects of life, except in so far as they are inevitably involved in all human conduct, are beyond its objective. Nor does or can it concern itself with the Hereafter. Even subject to these limitations it constitutes an epoch-making formulation of human rights based upon the widest possible consensus so far achieved and recorded.
>
> Religion (*deen*) must travel far beyond the Declaration both in its objectives and in its methods. It is concerned with the totality of life, both here and Hereafter. The Declaration certainly, like Islam, claims universality and seeks that the rights, freedom and duties set out and

expounded in it should be accepted and made effective everywhere in respect of everyone. Thus, in spirit, the Declaration, so far as it goes, and Islam are in accord. In respect of certain specific details, the Declaration employs language which is too general; Islam spells out the necessary safeguards. Occasionally, but unavoidably, there is a difference of approach. Islam and the Declaration are both concerned with human welfare, prosperity and happiness; but while the Declaration is concerned to secure them at the material level, through physical means and during this life only, Islam being a religion (*deen*), is concerned to secure them at all levels, through every available means, both here and the Hereafter. Islam recognises the interplay and interaction of all values and neglects none, but pays due regard to the need of co-ordination between them, which necessitates that a certain primacy must be assigned to and observed in respect of moral and spiritual values. These latter are not the primary concern of the Declaration. This divergence of approach leaves open the possibility of conflicting provisions for the regulation of specific detail. Should this happen, and the conflict prove irreconcilable, then it is obvious that so far as Islamic society is concerned, the Islamic provision must have priority.

Subject to this somewhat remote contingency, the revival and strengthening of true Islamic values would only help and further the achievement of the objectives of the Declaration.

As already indicated, Muslim thought, in all its aspects, has now been experiencing a healthy revival for close upon a century. The most hopeful feature of this revival is that attention is being directed more and more to the Qur'an in search of light and guidance in the fast-growing complexity of the conditions and values with which man is confronted today, and the effort is proving abundantly, richly, extravagantly fruitful and rewarding. This is indeed in accord with the assurance contained in the Qur'an that its treasures of light and guidance are inexhaustible.

Proclaim: 'If the ocean became ink for the words of my Lord (Sustainer), surely the ocean would be exhausted before the words of my Lord (Sustainer) came to an end **(18:109).**

And even more explicitly:

If all the trees that are in the earth were to become pens, and the ocean were ink, with seven oceans swelling it thereafter, the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise **(31:27).**

These treasures will be preserved and safeguarded for future generations of mankind:

Verily, We Ourself have sent down this Exhortation, and most surely We will be its Guardian **(15:9).**

> Thus the guidance set forth therein will continue to be available through all ages.[1]

See section 6.2 for the references of Qur'anic verses on human rights and obligations.

References:

1. *Islam and Human Rights*, by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan. Published by The London Mosque, 63 Melrose Road, London SW18. p. 140-143.

18. JEWISH SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

18.1 Jewish Scriptures (Hebraic Bible)

The Old Testament – or the Hebrew Bible – is a collection of works of differing lengths, written over a period of more than nine-hundred years. They were written in several languages and, like the Hadith literature, were based on materials collected from oral traditions. The contents of the Hebrew Bible is the same as Protestant Old Testament, but in a different order. The Catholic Old Testament includes extra books ejected from what became the Protestant version.

To get an overview of the contents, let us look at the contents of the Protestant version: the first five books, called the *Torah* in Hebrew and *Pentateuch* in English are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These books are traditionally attributed to Moses and deal with events from the beginning of the world to the death of Moses. These are the five primary elements of a collection of thirty-nine volumes that make up the Old Testament. Next come the twelve 'historical' books (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles) and the five 'poetical' books (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastics and The Song of Solomon). These are followed by five recorded accounts of the 'major prophets' (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel) and twelve 'minor prophets' (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi).

The additional books belonging to the Catholic Old Testament are: Tobit, Judith, Esther, The Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Susannah, and The Prayer of Azariah.[1]

The five books of the *Torah* convey what remains to us of the original monotheism of the Biblical Israelite communities such as the Samaritans. Judaism, which evolved from the original Israelite monotheism, however, not only accepts all the thirty-nine books but also other traditional Jewish teachings written down in the early centuries of the Christian era. The latter is collectively known as the *Talmud*. Judaism does not accept any revelation subsequent to its own. It therefore, precludes the part of the Bible called the New Testament, as well as the Qur'an.

18.2 The Bible

The Protestant version accepts the thirty-nine books of the Jewish Scriptures as the *Old* Testament. The *New* Testament, comprising twenty-seven books, has been added to the Old Testament. Of these twenty-seven books, four are accounts of the career of Jesus called the Gospels (attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), and one is a report of the activity and the preaching of the early followers of Jesus, which is called Acts of the Apostles (usually referred to as Acts). Then there are twenty-one Epistles (correspondence of various apostles concerning religious instructions), thirteen of which are attributed to Paul, who is the real founder of what we now call Christianity. Finally, there is the book of 'prophecy' called Revelations. Christianity does not

accept any revelation subsequent to Jesus and his Apostles. It, therefore, precludes the Qur'an.

18.3 History of the texts

There were at least three forms of Hebrew text around the third century B.C. They were the Masoteric text, the text used in part for the Greek translation, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. If all three forms of texts were available today a comparison would be possible and a decision could be reached as to what might have been the original text. Unfortunately, what is available is the Dead Sea Scrolls (Cave of Qumran), dating from not much before the arrival of Jesus; and a papyrus of the Ten Commandments of the second century C.E., which does not even fully agree with the classical text – the oldest Hebrew text of the Bible which dates from the ninth century C.E. The first Greek translation dates from the third century, and we can also mention the Latin version of the fourth century C.E., the Aramaic version, and the Syriac version, the last two being incomplete. The specialists have used all these versions to piece together in a multitude of revisions and versions the texts that we know today.

In the early days of Christianity, the foremost authority was oral tradition and the teachings of the Apostles. The first writings to circulate were Paul's letters. In fact, before 140 A.D. people were not aware that a collection of Gospel writings existed. For about thirty or forty years, the Gospel had existed as an almost exclusive oral tradition. The 'Evangelists, each according to his own outlook have collected and recorded in writing the material handed down by the prevailing tradition. Modern biblical scholars are agreed that Matthew, Mark, Luke

and John are not the authors of the four Gospels but rather titles attributed to compilations of diverse materials already collected by others. It was not until 170 A.D. that the four Gospels acquired the status of canon.

There were also many writings on Jesus in the early days of Christianity (see Luke 1.1) which the New Testament has excluded. Mention can be made of the Gospel of the Nazarenes, the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Egyptians, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of Barnabas. These are a few of the many which were in circulation but later burned and banned by order of the Church, from whence their name – **Apocrypha** – or *hidden* is derived. In C.E. 367 Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria compiled the list of works which were to carry Church approval. This list was ratified by the Church Council of Hippo in 393, and again by the Council of Carthage four years later. The question can easily be raised as to what arbitrary process was used to select the four Gospels used today out of the many that were in circulation, especially when some of the excluded books have a perfectly valid claim to historical authenticity. Moreover, the New Testament even in the highly questionable form we know it, has also been subjected to fairly drastic editing, censorship, revision, and creative translation, a process which continues to this day.

Thus, the human interference in both the Old and the New Testament is evidently considerable. Different versions of the same description can be found in the Old and the New Testament, as well as contradictions, historical errors, and incompatibilities with firmly established scientific data throughout.

18.4 Authenticity of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures

In the West, the critical study of the Scriptures is a recent development. Even today many people are content to accept the Bible – the Old and New Testaments – as it is, without questioning its authenticity or veracity. Only certain of the clergy has a comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, whereas the majority of the laity hears only selected readings as part of a sermon. One only needs to read some of the specialist studies of the Bible to be aware of the improbabilities and contradictions that exist in the Biblical texts. We have listed the reference of a typical case at the end of this chapter to which the interested reader may refer for further information.

However, quite aside from the contradictions in the Biblical texts, there are other serious issues which also cannot be ignored. We refer, in particular, to the blatant blackening of the character of the prophets, of barbaric social laws, immoral laws in warfare, and the condoning of outrageous practices such as incest, and other issues which conflict with our basic sense of morality and human values. In this chapter we discuss some of these questions, as well as point out some of the glaring inconsistencies within the text as a whole. In particular cases references are given. Further, we have outlined the Qur'anic views in cases where a contrasting parallel exists. In particular, we have discussed Abraham for the reason that he provide the most obvious common link between the Qur'an and the Bible. In the Bible, for example, God says that He made him 'the Father of a Multitude of Nations', and in the Qur'an Allah says that he (Abraham) had been given the title of 'the Leader of All Mankind'.

18.5 Biblical character of some of the great Prophets[2]

18.5.i Abraham

The Biblical portrayal of Abraham takes the following form: Abraham married his sister Sarah who was the daughter of his father but not his mother. As such, this constituted an incestuous marriage between brother and step-sister. Sarah was very beautiful. When the land in which they were living was afflicted by famine, Abraham decided to go to Egypt with his wife. However, since Sarah was a beautiful woman, Abraham was afraid that he would be killed if the Egyptians knew that Sarah was his wife. So, he told his wife to declare that she was his sister. When Pharaoh heard of Sarah's beauty he took Sarah into his household presumably taking her to be his wife. As a favour, he gave Abraham menservants and maidservants, and many cattle. But by taking Sarah into his household he incurred the displeasure of God who inflicted his household with plague. When Pharaoh became aware of the true nature of things, he chastised Abraham for misleading him by declaring his wife to be his sister. He then asked both of them to leave, but in kindness he did not take back the wealth that he had showered on Abraham because of Sarah (Genesis 12:10-20).

Abraham uses the same ploy with King Abim'elech of Gerar who took Sarah into his household on the understanding that Sarah was Abraham's sister. But before the king could touch Sarah God warned him in a dream that he would pay with his life for taking a man's wife into his household. So Abim'elech released Sarah and gave Abraham sheep, oxen and male and female slaves (Genesis 20:1-16).

Abraham was now a rich man because of the gifts he got from Pharaoh and King Abim'elech. As Sarah was barren, she tells Abraham to take Hagar the Egyptian maid as his wife. Abraham went in to Hagar, and she conceived (Genesis 16:1-4). Abraham called his son Ish'mael. When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God made a covenant with him, the condition of which was that he and his household would have to be circumcised in the flesh of their foreskins, a command which Abraham carried out without delay. God also made him the father of a multitude of nations. At that time, Ish'mael was thirteen years old. God then promised Abraham that he would return in the spring and Sarah would have a son and his name will be Isaac (Genesis Chapters 17 & 18).

> The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised. And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son[...] (Genesis 21:1,2)

Abraham named him Isaac. After Isaac was weaned Sarah said to Abraham:

> Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. (Genesis 21:10)

The Lord advised Abraham to do as Sarah suggested. After all, his descendants would be named through Isaac. However, He also promised that he would make a nation of the son of the slave woman. Abraham rose early in the morning, gave Hagar bread and a skin of water and sent her away with Ish'mael. She departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin

was finished Hagar cast her son under a bush. God heard the voice of the lad. An angel of the Lord called and asked Hagar to lift up the lad. God then opened Hagar's eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the skin of water, and gave the lad a drink. They lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt (Genesis 21:12-21).

After these things God wanted to test Abraham. He said:

> Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Mori'ah, and offer him there as a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you. (Genesis 22:2)

So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his ass, and took two of his young men, and his son Isaac to the place of which God had told him. He built an altar and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. Then Abraham took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said:

> Do not lay your hand on the lad; for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me. (Genesis 22:12)

Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and found behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horn. So Abraham took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. The angel of the Lord called a second time and said that because of his obedience to the Lord's command, the Lord promised to multiply his descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand on the seashore.

And by his descendants all the nations of the earth should be blessed. So Abraham returned and dwelt in Beer-sheba (Genesis 22:13-19) .

Note: See section 7.5 as to what the Qur'an has to say on Abraham.

According to the Qur'an both Ishmael and Issac were Abraham's sons and both became prophets in their own right. Abraham was tested by Allah, and because he passed all the tests he was made 'the Leader of Mankind'. As a further test, he was asked to sacrifice his son (Ish'mael) and when he was at the point of carrying it out, Allah redeemed him with a 'momentous sacrifice'. The sacrifice was not a ram (and this is not stated in the Qur'an) but a covenant between him and Allah, which was to build the *KABA*, the House of Allah, purify the House (the *Kaba*) for those who came to perform their rites, and to work for the cause of Allah. He was given the same book of guidance as were all other prophets who followed him, and according to the Qur'an: 'he was neither a Jew nor a Christian but a true Muslim' i.e. submitting from the heart to the laws of God. The way of life prescribed for mankind through him, as through all the prophets, is *Islam*, and all the followers of this path are to be called *Muslims*. Abraham had an impeccable character and stories about deceptions, as described in the Old Testament, are in direct contradiction to his respected place a great prophet of God. Moreover, how could God say Abraham's 'only son Isaac' – since there was never a time at which Isaac was Abraham's only son? And again, why did not God give Sarah a child before Abraham had to have a child with Hagar? These points, and many others, impress themselves upon the careful reader of the

Bible text. The Qur'an, however, shows no such inconsistencies: all the prophets are shown to be persons of high moral conduct – genuinely true to their calling as messengers of Allah.

18.5.ii Examples of immorality in other Biblical Prophets and kings

Noah
And he (Noah) drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he lay naked within his tent. (Genesis 9:21)

Saul
And he (Saul) stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all day and all that night, wherefore they say, is Saul also among the Prophets? (1 Samuel 19:24)

David
How glorious was the king of Israel (David) today, who uncovered (became naked) himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovered himself ! (2 Samuel 6:20)

And David sent messengers, and took her (Bath-sheba); and she came in unto him, and he lay with her[...] (2 Samuel 11-4)

David wickedly caused the death of Uriah, the husband of Bath-sheba. (2 Samuel 11:6-25)

Solomon
Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. (11-3).

He murdered his own half-brother Adonijah with all his supporters because he had wanted to marry just one of Solomon's many women. (1 Kings 2:13-25))

Isaiah
And the Lord said, like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years[...] young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. (Isaiah 20:3-4)

18.5.iii Examples of Mosaic Law

Some of the Mosaic laws given below reflect badly on Moses, if one is to maintain, against all reason and logic, that Moses was in fact the writer of the first five books of the Bible.

> And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who came from the service in the war. Moses said to them, 'Have you let all the women live? Behold, these caused the people of Israel, by the counsel of Balaam, to act treacherously against the Lord. Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him. But all the young girls who have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourself." (Numbers 31:14-18)

> When you draw near a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. And if its answer to you is peace and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labour for you. But

> if it makes no peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the Lord your God gives it into your hand you shall put all its males to the sword, but the women and the little ones, the cattle and everything else in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as a booty for yourself; and you shall enjoy the spoils of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you. Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not cities of the nations here. But the cities of these people that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes. (Deuteronomy 21:10-16)

> If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or mother, and, though they chastise him, will not give heed to them[...] Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones[...] (Deuteronomy 21: 18, 21)

> If a man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and then spurns her[...] because he did not find the tokens of virginity in her[...] And if the thing is true that the token of virginity was not found in the young woman, then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones[...] (Deuteronomy 22:13, 20, 21)

> If a man is found lying with a wife of another man, both of them shall die[...] (Deuteronomy 22:22)

> If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring both of them out to the gate of the city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbour's wife[...] (Deuteronomy 22:23)
>
> However, if a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her[...] (Deuteronomy (22:28)
>
> He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the Lord. No bastard shall enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 23:1,2)

18.5.iv Incest

Incest is very common in the whole of the Old Testament often involving the characters of the prophets and their families. Following are a few references:

Between father and daughters: (Genesis 19:33-35)

Between mother and son: (Genesis 35:22)

Between father-in-law and daughter-in-law: (Genesis 38:15-18)

Incest and rape between brother and sister: (2 Samuel 13:14)

Incest and rape between son and mothers: (2 Samuels 16:22)

Other kinds of incest (Leviticus 18:8-18, 20:11-14 and 17-21)

18.5.v Jesus

According to 'Matthew' Jesus was sent to the Jews:

> And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold a Canaanite woman from the region came out and cried, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon.' But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she is crying after us'. He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying 'Lord, help me.' And he answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed instantly. (Matthew: 15:21-28)

> These twelve [disciples] Jesus sent out, charging them, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. And preach as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. (Matthew 10:5,6)

However, 'Matthew' appears to contradict himself when he goes on to say:

> And Jesus came and spoke to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations[...]

(Here Matthew contradicts what he said earlier, that Jesus was sent for the lost sheep of Israel only)

> [...]baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, to the close of the age.' (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Qur'anic verse 3:49 when translated literally, appears to agree with the Bible that Jesus was given the powers to perform miracles, such as power to heal the blind and the lepers, and bring the dead back to life. However, this literalistic interpretation comes into direct contradiction with the following verses in which Allah claims the power of any command to be His alone.

(18:26) [...]They have no protecting friend beside Him, and He maketh none share in His command.

> **(40:12)** [...]But the command belongeth only to Allah, the Sublime, the Majestic.

There is no physical evidence that a human being can bring the dead back to life, and Jesus after all, according to the Qur'an, was a man and not a 'son' of God. The verse 3:49, therefore, seems to be allegorical where the most likely explanation of the 'raising of the dead' by Jesus is that it is a metaphorical description of his giving new life to a people (the Jews) who were spiritually dead. The 'healing of the blind and the leper' has a similar significance: namely, an inner regeneration of people who were spiritually diseased and blind to the truth.

The Bible, however, claims that Jesus did perform miracles in the simple sense of the word. The Qur'an does not refute this, but makes the point that whatever he did was performed only by the permission of God and not as the result of his own will. This point is explicitly made by the Bible too, but conveniently de-emphasised by many of today's churches.

> I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgement is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. (John 5:30)

> But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Luke 11:20)

> [...]Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me. I knew that thou hearest me always, but I have said this on account of the people standing by, that

> they may believe that thou didst send me. When he had said this, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages' and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him and let him go.' (John 11: 41-44)

It is interesting to note that Acts gives many examples of miracles performed in the name of Jesus, not only by the apostles but also by their later disciples. The master, Jesus, had said that the power to do such things was not his own. Logically, therefore, the inference must be that anyone who became a disciple of Jesus automatically received powers similar to those Jesus himself received from God.

According to 'Matthew', Jesus was sent only to 'the lost sheep of Israel'. Unfortunately, today, the nation-specific and monotheistic nature of Jesus' mission is glossed over and concealed by the so-called 'evangelical Christian' movements of which there are many. However, the Trinitarian, man-god creeds of modern Christology are by no means the founding blocks of the religion which has developed into what we today understand by the word 'Christianity'. The historical fact is that in the early part of 'Christianity' there was a struggle between two main factions. The former was **Judeo-Christianity,** staunch monotheism of the kind recognised by both Jews and Muslims, which recognised Jesus as a messenger, sent by God. The latter was what one might call **Pauline Christianity** that is, Christianity as preached – and largely invented – by Paul. It was only slowly that the former was supplanted by the latter, and it should be remembered that Pauline Christianity's eventual triumph

over Judeo-Christianity came about for reasons of temporal political expediency only.

Bucaille notes that, for Paul, the circumcision, Sabbath, and the form of worship practised in the Temple were henceforth old fashioned, even for the Jews. Christianity was to free itself from its political-cum-religious adherence to Judaism and open itself to Gentiles.[3]

It is important to note that the original teaching of Jesus does not exist and the Bible that exists today is based on oral traditions – corrupted ones at that.

According to the Qur'an Jesus was sent as a messenger to the Children of Israel. The book he received from Allah was the *Injeel* (Gospel). He confirmed the *Taurah* (law) and brought the good news of a messenger to come after him whose name should be Ahmad (another name for Muhammad, derived from the same three root letters H-M-D). When the Qur'an states that the same book was given to all the prophets, what it means is that the book given to all the Prophets contained the same law. Therefore, the law as revealed in the *Taurah* and the *Injeel* (Gospel) in its original form is preserved in the Qur'an which is the Word of Allah but, unlike the previous scriptures, free from all human interference. The Qur'an firmly rejects the proposition that Jesus was the 'son' of God.

The quotations below refer to two types of gospels: 'narrative gospels' and 'sayings gospel'. One of the major contradictions in the narrative gospels is that out of the four gospels in the modern Bible only 'Matthew' and 'Luke' contain some semblance of the teachings and the

sayings of Jesus. These sayings and teachings of Jesus are referred to as **the 'sayings gospel'** which according to Burton L. Mack is the 'lost gospel' as practised by the early Christians, before it was superseded by **the 'narrative gospels'**.

> The mythology that is most familiar to Christians of today developed in groups that formed in northern Syria and Asia Minor. There, Jesus' death was first interpreted as a martyrdom and then embellished as a miraculous event of crucifixion and resurrection. This myth drew on Hellenistic mythologies that told about the destiny of a divine being (or son of God). Thus, these congregations quickly turned into a cult of the resurrected or transformed Jesus whom they now referred to as the Christ, or the Lord, as well as the Son of God. The congregations of the Christ, documented most clearly in the letters of Paul from the 50s, experienced a striking shift in orientation, away from the teachings of Jesus and toward the spirit of the Christ who had died and was raised from the dead. It was this myth that made the narrative gospels possible.[4]
>
> The first followers of Jesus could not have imagined, nor did they need, such a mythology to sustain them in their efforts to live according to his teachings. The sayings gospel was quite sufficient for the Jesus movement as they understood it. Even after the narrative gospels became the rage, the sayings gospel was still intact. It was still being copied and read with interest by ever-widening circles. And it was available in slightly different

> versions in the several groups that continued to develop within the Jesus movement. Eventually, the narrative gospels prevailed as the preferred portrayal for Christians, and the sayings gospel finally lost to the historical memory of the Christian church. Were it not for the fact that the two authors of narrative gospels incorporated sizeable portions of the sayings gospel into their stories of Jesus' life, the sayings gospel of the first followers of Jesus would have disappeared without a trace in the transitions taking place. We never would have known about the Jesus movements that flourished prior to the Christian church. **But Matthew and Luke each had a copy of the sayings gospel, and the material each copied from it largely overlapped.** It was this fortuitous coincidence that made it possible in recent times to recover the book, even though the sayings now sound like the pronouncements of the Son of God instead of the teachings of Jesus.[5]

Further evidence of the sayings Gospel come from the discovery in 1946 of a cache of twelve Coptic codices and fragments near Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt. The collection, which was deposited about 400 CE, contains approximately fifty works. Amongst these important collections is the Gospel According to Thomas. This is a remarkable text that may tell us a great deal about the historical Jesus. The title at the beginning reads 'These are the sayings of Living Jesus'. Thus **the Gospel of Thomas** is a sayings text i.e. it is a gospel that has sayings of Jesus, without any particular narrative context. In fact, there is only one reference to a cross, and that is in the context of a proverb that 'you have to bear the cross' meaning that

you have to bear your burden. We repeat, this is the only reference to a cross of any kind. There is also no mention of the resurrection whatsoever. The original manuscripts are kept in the Coptic museum in Egypt, forming a challenge to the imaginative mythology which has become orthodox Christianity. Mark Tully in a recent television series called *The Lives of Jesus*, (Dec. 1996) discussed the implication of this hidden gospel with some experts in the field, and found the Gospel according to Thomas to be an important collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus.[6]

The distortion of Christianity from the original teachings of Jesus as contained in his sayings, is entirely due to Paul. A similar comparison can be made of Islam which, as practised today, is governed by the writings of Bukhari and Muslim which distort both the spirit and the letter of the Qur'an. The only qualitative difference between the two groups is that the Qur'an has remained both intact and in its original form. The Bible, on the other hand, is based on oral traditions of comparable quality to the writings of Bukhari, Muslim and others. That humanity is so divided today is the result of the writings of the likes of Paul, Bukhari, and Muslim who ignored the fundamental values of life, as taught by the prophets. Instead, they based their writings totally on oral traditions, collected over a period of time and, let us not forget, leaned heavily on their own imaginations.

Finally, the reason here for bringing out some of the many anomalies found in the Old and the New Testaments is to prove the point which the Qur'an clearly indicates in many of its verses, namely, that **the Old and the New**

Testament, as they exist today, are not the texts as originally revealed.

The Qur'an is free from all such anomalies. It is the Word of God without the influence of human interference, and contains a message completely consistent with all that the prophets received prior to the Qur'anic revalation. The Qur'an claims this quite categorically when it reminds Muhammad that nothing has been given to him that was not given before (41:43). One reason for the revelation of the Qur'an is simply that the previous books do not exist in their original form. One can make an exhaustive comparison of the Biblical texts and the Qur'an with regard to points, which on the face appear to be similar and yet hold fundamental differences due simply to the human element in the Biblical texts. Where modern scientific investigation has been able to contribute any light, it has consistently found in favour of the Qur'anic presentation.

References:

1. *Making the Christian Bible by John Barton*. Published by Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd. Spencer Court, 140-142 Wandsworth High Street, London SW18 4JJ
2. All Biblical quotations are from "*The Holy Bible*": Revised Standard Version.1952.
3. *The Bible The Qur'an and Science*, by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris. p. 67, 68.
4. *The Lost Gospel* (The Book of Q and Christian Origins), by Burton L. Mack. Published in Great Britain by Elements Book Ltd. Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset. p. 2.
5. Ibid,. p. 3.
6. *The Lives of Jesus*, A BBC television series presented in December 1996 by Mark Tully. This paragraph is a selection from the last programme of that series.

19. HUMAN EVOLUTION

The analysis here is based on the book *The Origin of Man* by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. The material discussed is in effect a summary of pages 160 to 219 of his book with quotations taken from several pages of the text, but excluding the Qur'anic verses he quotes. Dr. Bucaille has quoted many verses from the Qur'an in support of his view that their meanings are explained by the data of contemporary knowledge. One must understand that any comparison of the facts stated in the Qur'an must be based on facts of scientific data that are well established. This excludes theories that are likely to change. Dr. Bucaille warns that discrepancy exists between the translations of the verses quoted by him and the translatations of texts currently in use. This is particularly true in statements on man and science because of the tradition of translating verses based on the interpretations suggested by the early commentators, whose view of reality could not possibly be in keeping with today's discoveries.

> We begin with the Qur'an's description of the origins of life. In general, it devotes a great deal of space to the morphological transformations undergone by man, repeatedly emphasising the fact that God fashioned him as he willed. We likewise discover statements on human reproduction that are expressed in precise terms that lend themselves to comparison with secular knowledge we possess today on the subject.[1] In fact, some of the verses go beyond embryonic growth to include the transformations of human

> morphology which took place over the ages, and this has formally been proven by palaeontology.
>
> There is obviously a very wide gap, however, between a concept of Man's decent from the apes (a theory that is totally untenable) and the idea of transformations of the human form in the course of time (which has been fully proven). The confusion between the two reaches a height when they are merged together – with the very flimsy arguments – under the banner of Evolution. This unfortunate confusion has caused certain people to wrongly imagine that since the word is used in reference to man, it must mean that, *ipso facto*, man's origin may be traced to the apes.[2]

One must clearly understand that in the verses quoted by Dr. Bucaille, there is not the slightest hint of a concept of the materialistic origin of man.

> In actual fact, the Qur'anic statements dealing with the subject have a bearing on the question of the transformations that have taken place in human morphology over the ages. The latter are indeed governed by the genetic code formed by the union of chromosomes received from the paternal and maternal reproductive cells. The genetic inheritance thus brought together determines, first in the embryo, (i.e. before the second month of pregnancy) and then in the foetus (i.e. after the second month of pregnancy) the possible appearance of morphological changes as compared with the father and mother. These modifications become definitive after the child is

born and during its growth in childhood. [...] It is therefore the combined total changes that take place over successive generations which ultimately determine the morphological transformations that palaeontologists have noted in various human groups from past ages.[3]

There is absolutely no scientific proof to suggest that man was born of the evolved forms of present-day apes. On the contrary, everything suggests against this outmoded theory. **What science has shown is that, at a certain point in time, human species appeared which gradually transformed itself into today's man.** From a scientific point of view, the crux of the problem is that we do not know what man evolved from: Was it from an autonomous lineage or from one that could be connected with another animal lineage? Whatever the answer, recent studies in genetics indicate that the process could not have taken place by any other method than the addition of new information governing the appearance of structures and functions specific to man. These phenomena fit perfectly into the pattern of an expanding genetic code, as suggested by the theory of creative evolution.[4]

References:

1. *What is The Origin of Man?* by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris. p. 162, 163.
2. Ibid,. p. 170.
3. Ibid,. p. 180.
4. Ibid,. p. 212.

20. CONCLUSION

This book is an attempt at studying the Qur'an in a way that involves many aspects of our life, both as individuals and as a collective entity. It also involves a method of study for the understanding of the Qur'an. In this respect, an open mind is absolutely essential, a mind open to argument, rather than one closed by tradition and prejudice.

Islam, the way of life for mankind, is not a religion in the conventional sense of the word. It is a complete system in the sense that Religion and State are an integrated whole which cannot and should not be separated. Such a religion is called ***deen***, the way of life beneficial to mankind. In such a system the supreme authority belongs to Allah, the Sustainer of the Universe.

The people who would be entrusted to run an Islamic State must have the quality, ability and integrity of personality which would never compromise fundamental Qur'anic principles. This is why the individual in an Islamic Community must be aware of his or her rights, so that any untoward deviation by the ruling authority from the straight path, as described in the Qur'an, can be prevented by popular demand. Further to this, it would be impossible to establish such a State without first bringing about the internal revolutionary changes in our own self or *nafs*. Those who are convinced of the veracity and value of such a program, reflect it in their day-to-day actions. The most basic requirement for Muslims is to hold fast together and not to divide into sects. This point is made very clearly in chapter 16 and elsewhere. This

condition is so important that the Prophet was instructed to dissociate himself from those who divide their *deen* into sects.

> **(6:159)** Verily, as for those who have broken the unity of their faith and have become sects – thou hast nothing to do with them[...]

The objective of Islam is essentially to reconcile the differences between human beings in order to achieve the establishment of a true Islamic State. This is why race, colour, gender has no place in Islam. The only distinction that Islam recognises is: 'What is your *deen* and do you believe in the system or not?'

One may be under the impression that such a State is not possible within the time scale of an individual's lifetime and yet the historical evidence says otherwise. **About 1400 years ago in Medina such a State did materialise within a period of 23 years**. A thriving community that existed at that time expanded outwards to become a powerful world empire. And we are talking about the transformation of a people who were renowned for burying their daughters in sand! Yet these people who had no knowledge, and were absolutely steeped in *jahilia* (ignorance), were transformed into the world's custodians of science, technology and enterprise. Sadly, the question is that after such a State was established, why did it eventually collapse within a period of 30 years? (The 30 years refer to the period when a true Islamic state existed which ended with Caliph Hazrat Ali). The answer is simple: the rapid expansion that followed this period brought with it all the seeds of distruction. Those who came to power tried to maintain their grip on power on a

family and tribal basis. Sects, which did not exist before, were created. Unimaginable internecine warfare destroyed the fabric of the society. This list of degradation can be extended endlessly. Thus, all the basic principles as enunciated in the Qur'an were violated, but the initial momentum (of a creditable system) went a long way before the final collapse came in 1924 with the end of the Caliphate which signalled the final death knell for the corrupt corporate 'Islam' in any real political sense.

Muslims, like the Jews, still think that they are the favoured people of Allah and will one day get back lost glory. We still do not seem to understand clearly that Allah accepts prayers from only those who are on the right path, i.e. those who follow the laws of Allah. Doing all manner of misdeeds and then hoping to overcome one's problems by praying is a fool's paradise, and will never solve our problems. **Allah favours only those who follow His Laws.** The verse in which He promises to the believers that they will succeed can only be fulfilled if there is a community of believers who are prepared to carry out His program.

> **(24:55)** Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed in the earth as He caused those who were before them to succeed; and He will surely establish for them their *deen* which He hath approved for them; and He will change their state, from the fear in which they lived, to one of security and peace.

And for the believers there is a contract with Allah:

> **(9:111)** Lo! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for *Jannah* (Paradise)[...]
>
> **(48:28)** [...]Allah hath promised unto such of them as believe and do good works forgiveness and immense reward.

Once we fulfil our part of the contract (i.e. with 'belief and good deeds') only then will Allah's favour descend on us. And this fact is independent of who we happen to be. As Islam by definition is universal in character, any community that conforms to the basic principles of *deen* is Muslim. And when a community of believers is established which is prepared to carry out Allah's *deen* then success will come, not before.

The present success of the West in terms of material progress may lead one to think that its power and prosperity will remain uppermost for the foreseeable future. This is a shortsighted view. The Western countries have certainly achieved success by researching into science, technology and nature and attained benefits for doing so. This is to be expected since the Qur'an guarantees the benefits of knowledge and exploration, independent of who we are. **We get the benefit if we do the work, not otherwise.** At one time, Muslims did the research and got the benefits. Then the Hadith literature converted the Muslims to the ridiculous wishful thinking that in order to follow the Qur'anic guidance it was enough to perform the 'five pillars' and leave the rest to Allah! Bukhari, Muslim and their ilk have succeeded in duping the Muslims just as Paul succeeded in laying the

foundation which brought the Christians to their lamentable present beliefs.

What the West does not see is that the seeds of destruction are imbedded in its **Capitalist system,** a system which **breaks many of the fundamental principles outlined in the Qur'an**, such as, the principles of equity, fairness and justice. Today, instead of the rights of the community, the selfish rights of the individuals have become pre-eminent. Sexual immorality, drugs, prostitution, gambling – to name a few – are tolerated widely in the name of Freedom. 'Truth' is what the media publicises and not what is true in the eyes of Allah. Rights under the law are only available for the rich. It does not matter how a business is run, so long as it makes profit for its directors and shareholders.

One of the most important calamities that has the potential to destroy the society is the way the State, the banks and individuals which have access to money make even more money by charging interest that bears no resemblance to what can be regarded as legitimate. This system has impoverished many countries when, instead of encouraging nations to depend on their own resources, the system has encouraged them to borrow large sums of money for which the countries ultimately become mortgaged. If this continues, eventually the imbalance will be so great that the whole system will come crashing down. If the West thinks that its prosperity will be protected by its superior technological progress then it is sadly mistaken. Allah's laws do not discriminate. In fact, many of the present day calamities and diseases are caused simply because we have violated these laws and principles.

If there is still doubt that the *deen*, as prescribed in the Qur'an, is nothing more than an utopian idea, then the only answer is to test the system. It should be possible to demonstrate to the world that such a system can be achieved within the lifetime of an individual, provided the people of the State – and it can be any State – is committed to carrying out the program. In the initial stage, an intensive program of education for changing the attitude of the people to the system would be required. This would be cost-effective simply because of the enormous long-term benefits, not only for the individual but for the people as a whole. There would be people who would have doubts as the experiment progresses. There would also be interference by external powers. And it would require enormous dedication by the majority of the believers who would face enormous challenges, but if they remained united and steadfast, then success would come with Allah's help.

One must remember that the Qur'an encourages us to achieve a good life in this world as well as in the hereafter as quoted by the oft-used *Doa* '*Rabbana atina fid-dunya hasanatan wa fil-akhirati hasanataw wa quin a-azab-an-nar*' which means, 'O our Sustainer give us good in this life as well as the Hereafter'. And it is only by committing to Allah's *deen* wholeheartedly that we can achieve this. If on the other hand, without much commitment, we simply go on praying to Allah and performing our five pillars then nothing will be achieved. In fact, **if we continue to violate Allah's Religion of Truth (*Deen*) then He will continue to destroy us and raise other nations** in our place.

> **(47:38)** If you turn away He will replace you with another kind of people who will not be like you.

Allah also promises in the following verse that the universal system of *deen* will prevail above all other systems. Any other man-made systems, because of their inherent contradictions will fail, no matter how well organised.

> **(9:33)** He it is Who hath sent His messengers with the guidance and the religion of truth (*deen*), that He may cause it to prevail over all religion (ways of life), however much the disbelievers are averse.

Allah has given us everything to make our life beneficial and peaceful, and yet we hardly consider His messages and rarely study His Book seriously.

> **(17:89)** And We have explained to mankind, in this Qur'an, every kind of similitude, yet the greater part of mankind refuse (to receive it) except with ingratitude.

> **(45:13)** And He has made subservient to you, from Himself, all that is in the heavens and on earth: in this, behold, are messages indeed for people who think!

-------00000-------

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 (A1)

Gabriel *(Jibreel)*: We quote, 'The word is from Hebrew. It has been used in the Qur'an three times, twice in *sura* 2:97, 98 and once in *sura* 66:4. It refers to that heavenly force which brought the Holy Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (2:97). It has also been called Holy Spirit (*Ruhul-Qudus*) (16:102) and True Spirit (*Ruhul-Ameen*) (26:193). We cannot comprehend or conceive anything about this heavenly force, as only a Prophet would know. This force used to bring the revelation exactly as ordained, without any addition, alteration or mixture.'

Appendix 2 (A2)

Angel (*Malaika*): We quote: 'The Qur'an also used *Malaika* as messengers in verse 22:75. This, of course, is one aspect of its functions and duties: otherwise they are those who direct affairs by Command (79:5), those who govern the events and disperse by Command (51:4). These forces are not given any will, independent power or discretion to do whatever they like – but they carry out the given task/responsibility as ordained by Allah.'

Appendix 3 (A3)

Devil (*Iblees or Shaitan*): We quote: 'The Qur'an has termed *Iblees* and *Shaitan* as the two faces of the same coin. While narrating the story of Adam, the refusal to bow, then rebellion, disobedience, and finally the challenge to mislead mankind, all these are attributed to *Iblees*; and when it mentions the story of Adam's fall, it is

attributed to *Shaitan* (2:36, 7:11-20, 20:116-120). This shows that *Iblees* is the name used for a specific personality trait and the way this trait operates is called *Shaitan*. *Iblees* and *Shaitan* or pride and rebellion are in fact obstacles which hinder the progress of human Self (*Nafs*).'

Appendix 4 (A4)

Rakat: A *rakat* is a complete set of postures from standing to bending and then prostration. If a prayer is composed of 4 *rakats* then one must sit down after two *rakats* and then stand up to complete two more *rakats*, before sitting down to end the 4 *rakats*.

Appendix 5 (A5)

The words *Rahman* and *Raheem* originate from the same root (*Ra-ha-meem*). The word *Rahamat* is also from the same root, meaning 'nourishment (manifest or hidden) provided to a person or to a thing, according to its need'. For example, the word *Reham*, which comes from the same root, means the mother's womb where a baby receives nourishment without any effort on the part of the baby. The Qur'an additionally states that the process of our development is according to our deeds, and to achieve this we cannot rely on Allah's grace alone but rather on what we do in our life by way of positive actions as well. With this background to the root of the words *Rahman* and *Raheem*, we can now look at the verses which include these two very important attributes of Allah, in order to understand their real meaning.

As an attribute of Allah the word *Rahman* appears in the Qur'an 55 times without any other attribute. The word *Raheem* appears 120 times, mostly combined with the attribute *Gafur* (forgiving), and a number of times with the word *Taw-wa-bur* (relenting). The words *Rahman* and *Raheem* come together six times outside of the formula which introduces all but one of the suras.

The qualification of *Raheem* with the attributes 'forgiving' or 'relenting' indicates that this type of mercy relates to our action and deeds. In other words, although Allah is prepared to forgive the mistakes in our deeds, the process of our development is according to our deeds. And so, simply praying for Allah's mercy without any good deeds can have no real effect.

On the other hand, the word *Rahman* often appears on its own, without any qualification. This attribute clearly relates to the meaning of nourishment or sustenance. In other words Allah gives benefits which sustains everyone irrespective of whether he does good deeds or not. For example: He gives air and water freely, and energy from the sun, in the form of heat and light, without which sustenance is impossible.

The verse references are given below for further study and understanding from the Qur'an.

***Rahman* (Beneficent):** (2:163), (13:30), (17:110), (19:18, 26, 44, 45, 58, 61, 69, 75, 78, 85, 88, 91, 92, 93, 96), (20:5, 90, 108, 109), (21:26, 36, 42, 112), (25:26, 59, 60, 63), (26:5), (27:30), (36:11, 15, 23, 52), (41:2), (43:17, 19, 20, 33, 36, 45, 81), (50:33), (55:1), (59:22), (67:3, 19, 20, 29), (78:37, 38).

***Raheem* (Merciful):** (2:37, 54, 128, 143, 160, 163, 173, 182, 192, 199, 218, 226), (3:31, 89, 129), (4:16, 23, 25, 29, 64, 96, 100, 106, 110, 129, 152), (5:3, 34, 39, 74), (5:98), (6:54, 145, 165), (7:151, 153, 167), (8:69, 70), (9:5, 27, 91, 99, 102, 104, 117, 118, 128), (10:107), (11:41, 90), (12:53, 64, 92, 98), (14:36), (15:49), (16:7, 18, 47, 110, 115, 119), (17:66), (21:83), (22:65), (24:5, 20, 22, 33, 62), (25:6, 70), (26:9, 68, 104, 122, 140, 159, 175, 191, 217), (27:11, 30), (28:16), (30:5), (32:6), (33:5, 24, 43, 50, 59, 73), (34:2), (36:5, 58), (39:53), (41:2, 32), (42:5), (44:42), (46:8), (48:14) (49:5, 12, 14), (52:28), (57:9, 28), (58:2, 12), (59:10, 22), (60:7, 12), (64:14), (66:1), (73:20).

***Rahman* and *Raheem*:** (Beneficent and Merciful) (1:1), (1:3), (2:163), (27:30), (41:2), (59:22).

Appendix 6(A6)

The following section is based on chapter 3 of the book *Truth or Consequences*, by Dr. Alauddin Shabazz. There is a common belief, not only among the vast majority of the Muslims, but also to the people in the West, that the Prophet was illiterate, that is, he could neither read nor write. Verse 7:157 is often quoted in support of this view. A typical translation of the opening of the verse is as follows:

> **(7:157)** Those who follow the messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write *(ummi)*[...]

The word *ummi* is thus usually translated as one who can neither read nor write.

However, it would be unfair to draw this conclusion without looking at other relevant verses which show significantly, that the Qur'an means something quite different than the literal translation of the word *ummi* as 'illiterate'. For example, verse 62:2 states:

> **(62:2)** He it is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones (*ummiyyeen*) a messenger of their own, to recite to them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and Wisdom, though before this they were indeed in manifest error.

This verse tells us that the Prophet was sent amongst the *ummiyyeen* 'from among themselves'. The word *ummiyyeen* here refers to the whole population of Mecca at that time. Thus, a literal translation would again imply that the whole Arab population was illiterate or *ummi*. Even if we accept the word *ummi* as meaning 'illiterate', we cannot possibly say that the whole of the Arab population was illiterate, as we know for certain that this was not the case. The Qur'an itself mentions scribes among them, that is, people who could both read and write. What is true is that people were in manifest error simply because they, at that time, did not receive any revelation which instructed them to the way of life prescribed by Allah, and this revelation was recorded by means of the written word. For further clarification we look at verse 3:20 which states:

> **(3:20)** And if they argue with thee, (O Muhammad) say: I have surrendered my purpose to Allah and (so have) those who follow me. And ask those who have received the Scripture

> aforetime, (meaning the Jews and Christians) as well as the unlettered people (*ummiyyeen*) (meaning the Arabs), 'Have you (too) surrendered yourselves unto Him?' If they surrender, then truly they are rightly guided, and if they turn away, then your duty is no more than to deliver the message. Allah sees all that is in (the hearts of) His servants.

In this verse the Qur'an gives clues into the usage of the terms ***ummi*** and ***ummiyyeen***. Here the Qur'an is making a distinction between the people who have received the book i.e. the Jews and the Christians, from the Arabs who are addressed as *ummiyyeen*. The Prophet, who by this time had received the scripture, is asking everybody including the Jews and Christians, to submit to the guidance given by Allah.

Now consider verses 2:78,79:

> **(2:78, 79)** Among them are unlettered folk who know the scripture not except from hearsay. They but guess. Therefore woe unto those who write the scripture with their own hands and then say, 'This is from Allah,' that they may purchase a small gain therewith. Woe unto them for what their hands have written, and woe unto them what they earn thereby.

In these verses (2:78,79), we find that some Jews during the time of Musa are termed *ummiyyeen*, since they had no knowledge of the scripture. Although the verses 2:28,79 do not directly mentions Jews, the reference to them becomes clear if we read the few verses that precede

it. Further, the very same people pretended to know and are charged by Allah with 'writing a book' with their 'own hands'. Thus, they could not have been 'unlettered' in the conventional sense but only in the sense of not having knowledge of the scriptures, and, therefore, lacking Allah's guidance. Hence, these two verses definitely establish the real meaning of *ummi* or *ummiyyeen* – as used in the Qur'an – as 'scripturally illiterate' and 'people with no knowledge of the Scripture' respectively

The following two verses state that the Prophet, prior to his receiving revelation, had no knowledge of the scripture (hence he was a *ummi*), and Allah was going to give him this knowledge.

> **(29:48)** And thou (O Muhammad) wast not a reader of any Scripture before it, nor didst thou write it with thy right hand, for then might those have doubted who follow falsehood.

In this verse the Qur'an is stating quite clearly that the Prophet, prior to the receipt of revelation himself, had not read any scripture nor written anything on the subject and, therefore, by implication was scripturally unlettered, that is, one who had not previously read any scripture. It does not follow that he was 'unlettered' in the general sense of the word.

> **(87:6)** We shall make thee read (O Muhammad) so that thou shalt not forget.

This verse is very significant as Allah is taking it on Himself to impart scriptural knowledge to the Prophet by

sending revelation to him. This does not mean to teach him how to read and write in the conventional sense. He in turn has to impart that knowledge to his people. Hence the statement that the Prophet will not forget the revelations sent to him.

Thus, the Qur'an gives enough evidence to show that *ummi* signifies one who has no knowledge of the scripture. The Prophet is referred to as *ummi* in the Qur'an because he had not read any scriptures prior to receiving revelation himself and, therefore, had no scriptural knowledge. Similarly, the Arabs were called *ummiyyeen* because they, as a people, had not received any revelation prior to the Qur'an, and therefore could not lead their life according to Allah's guidance. In other words, both the Prophet and the Arabs were 'scripturally illiterate', not illiterate in the general sense of the word. Thus in using the words *ummi* and *ummiyyeen* the Qur'an is not referring to one's general illiteracy but to one's scriptural illiteracy.

The Prophet is no longer among us, but the Qur'an is there as Allah's book of guidance. If we do not devote ourselves to the understanding of the Qur'an and to following its instructions then as far as the Qur'an is concerned we are *ummi* or 'scripturally illiterate'. Simply reciting the book without understanding what it means, in effect, leads to scriptural illiteracy, as we are unable to follow the guidance given in the Qur'an

References:

Exposition of the Qur'an, by Gulam Ahmed Parwez

Tolu-E-Islam Trust (Regd) 25B Gulberg, Lahore-11, Pakistan.
p. 11.

Truth or Consequences, by Dr. Alauddin Shabazz.
Chapter 3, pages 31-34. Publisher: New Mind Productions, Inc.
P.O. Box 5185
Jersey City, NJ 07305.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, by Marmaduke Pickthall. Published by Taj Company, 3151, Turkman Gate, Delhi - 110006.

2. *The Holy Qur'an*, by Yusuf Ali. Published by Dar Al Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon, P.O. Box 6089.

3. *The Message of the Qurán*, by Muhammad Asad. Published by Dar Al-Andalus, Gibralter.

4. *Exposition of the Qur'an*, by Gulam Ahmed Parwez. Tolu-E-Islam Trust (Regd) 25B Gulberg, Lahore-11, Pakistan.

5. *The True Translation of the Glorious Qur'an*, by Late Ali Ahmad Khan Jullundri. Published by World Islamic Mission, 18-K Gulberg 2, Lahore, Pakistan.

6. *The Holy Qur'an* by Maulana Muhammad Ali. Published in USA by Specialty Promotions Co. Inc. Chicago, Illinois.

7. *Sahih Al-Bukhari* - Volumes 1 to 9, Translated by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Published by Kitab Bhaban, New Delhi, India.

8. *Sahih Muslim*, Translated by Abdul Hamid Siddiqi. Volume 1. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers and Booksellers, 7 Aibak Road (New Anarkali) Lahore - 7 (Pakistan).

9. *Educational Philosophy of the Holy Qur'an*, by Dr. Mahar Abdul Haq. Published by Naushaba Publications, D.D.A. Flats, New Ranjit Nagar, New Delhi - 110008.

10. *Development of Muslim Theology Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* by Duncan B. Macdonald. Published by Premier Book House, 4/5 Katchery Road, Lahore, Pakistan.

11. *The Principles of Law-making in Islam*, by G.A. Parwez. Meezan Publications: 27-B Shahalam Market, Lahore, Pakistan.

11.1 *Modernisation of legal System in Muslim Countries*. Summary of an introductory address included in ref: no. 9., by Dr. Sobhi Mahmassani.

12. *Qur'anic System of Law*, by Allama Enayatullah Mashriqi. Akhuwat Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

13. *Quranocracy*, by Dr S.A. Wadud. Khalid Publishers P.O. Box 4109, Lahore - 54600, Pakistan.

14. *Conspiracies against the Qur'an*, by Dr. S.A. Wadud. Khalid Publishers, P.O. Box 4190, Lahore - 54600, Pakistan.

15. *God, Man and the Universe*, by Inayat Ullah Khan El-Mashriqi. Akhuwat Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

16. *Man's Destiny (Tazkira)*, by Allama Inayat Ullah Khan Al-Mashriqi. Translated and edited from Urdu by Shabbir Hussain. Publisher: Mujahid Publications, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

17. *Freedom for Qur'an* by Ahmad Nawaz and published by Ahmad Nawaz. Mr. Nawaz has dedicated his book for the service of mankind and as such there is no copyright restriction.

18. *Zakah* by Abdul Rehman Ansari. Published by IPCI, 481 Coventry Road, Small Heath, Birmingham B10 0JS.

19. *The Place of Hadith in Islam* - The Muslims Students Association of the USA and Canada. July 11-13, 1975.

20. *The Bible the Qur'an and Science*, by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris.

21. *What is the Origin of Man*? by Dr. Maurice Bucaille. Publisher Seghers, 6 Place Saint-Sulpice 75006 Paris.

22. *The Religion of Islam*, by Maulana Muhammad Ali M.A., LL.B. Published by National Publication and Printing House U.A.R.

23. *Ulum Al-Qurán*, by Ahmad von Denffer. The Islamic Foundation, 223 London Road, Leicester LE2 1ZE, U.K.

24. *Women in Islam*, by B. Aisha Lemu and Fatima Heeren. Published by The Islamic foundation, 223 London Road, Leicester LE2 1ZE.

25. *The Qur'an: Basic Teachings*, by T.B. Irving, K. Ahmad and M.M. Ahsan. Published by The Islamic Foundation, 223 London Road, Leicester LE2 1ZE.

26. *Islam and Human Rights*, by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan. Published by The London Mosque, 63 Melrose Road, London SW18.

27. *A Short History of the Saracens*, by Syed Amir Ali. Published by Kitab Bhaban, New Delhi - 110002.

28. *A Restoration of Faith*, by M.A. Malek. Published by M. A. Malek.

29. *The Islamic Tradition of "Moon Sighting" and its Implications*.Published by M.A. Malek

30. *A Modern Guide to Astronomical Calculations of Islamic Calendar,Times & Qibla*, by Dr. Mohammad Ilyas. Berita Publishing Sdn, Bhd. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

31. *Tafseer Al-Qur'an Bil Qur'an* (Explanation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an): Lecture by Syed Mustafa Ali.

32. *Islamic State* -- First Principles: Lecture by Syed Mustafa Ali.

33. *Ramadan -- Training with an Objective*: Lecture by Syed Mustafa Ali.

34. *Ramadan – A Time for Change*: Lecture by David Stokes.

35. *Implications of Ahadith for Islam*: Lecture by Mohammed Abdul Malek.

36. *A Simplified Approach to the Study of the Qurán*: Lecture by M. A. Malek.

37. *The Qur'anic Punishment for Theft*, by Saiyed Shahid Ali, London. Article published in Al-Balaagh Vol 21. No.3.

38. *Does the Qur'an Sanction the Hitting of Women*? by Rachael Tibbett.

39. *Question Time* by Haji Ibrahim Golightly. Published in "The Message", July - Sept. 1995 issue, by the United Muslim Association (U.K), 31 Crawley Road, London N22 6AG.

Ibrahim Golightly died in Bosnia when he was carrying food for relief, in the darkness of the night, and the van overturned killing both him and his collegue.

40. Letter to Al-Balaagh, Nov/Dec 1996 issue. P.O. Box 1925, Lensia1820, South Africa. By Dr. Sayed Abdul Wadud. (Lahore, Pakistan).

41. Letter to Al-Balaagh, Nov/Dec 1996 issue. P.O. Box 1925, Lensia1820, South Africa. By Basheer Ahmed Vania. (Lensia, South Africa).

42. *Islam: Taking root in Europe* by Sahib Mustaqim Bleher. Published by "Islamic Party of Britain" in their official Party News report, "Common Sense" dated Last Quarter 1992. Issue number 8.

43. *A pamphlet on: The Islamic View on the Prohibition of Alcohol*, by S.M. Bleher. Published by UK Islamic Mission Dawah Centre, 401-403 Alum Rock Road. Birmingham B8 3DT.

44. *The Guardian*: (i) News item on front page dated 7.3.87.
(ii) Passages from the article "Impossible debt on road to global ruin" by F. Clairmonte and J. Cavanagh, dated 9.1.87.

45. *A New Arabic Grammar*, by J.A. Haywood and H.M. Nahmud. Publisher Lund Humphries, London.

46. *Arabic-English Lexicon*, (8 parts), by Edward William Lane. Published by Islamic Book Centre, 25-B, Masson Road, P.O. Box 1625. Lahore-3, Pakistan.

47. *Arabic-English Dictionary: The Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Edited by J. M. Cowan. Published by Spoken Language Services, Inc. P.O. Box 783. Ithaca, New York.

48. *Al-Qur'an and Al-Hadith Databases*, by The Islamic Computing Centre. 73, St. Thomas's Road, London N4 2QJ.

49. *The Alim*, The ISL Software Corporation. P.O. Box 90005 Houston, Texas.

50. *The Holy Bible*: Revised Standard Version.1952.

51. *The Lost Gospel (The Book of Q and Christian Origins)*, by Burton L. Mack. Published in Great Britain by Elements Book Ltd.

52. *Conspiracy in Jerusalem* (The hidden origins of Jesus), by Kamal Salibi. Publishers I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. London.

53. *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, by M. Baigent, R. Leigh & H. Lincoln. Published by Corgi Books.

54. *The History of Christianity*, A Lion Handbook. Published by Lion Publishing, 121 High Street, Berkhamsted, Herts, England.

55. *The Lives of Jesus*, A BBC television series presented at the end of 1996 by Mark Tully.

56. *Making the Christian Bible* by John Barton. Published by Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd.
1. Spencer Court, 140-142 Wandsworth High Street, London SW18 4JJ